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THE HISTORY SHEET OR CASE-PAPER SYSTEM

THE HISTORY SHEET

OR

CASE-PAPER SYSTEM

BY

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LONDON

P. S. KING & SON

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1909

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INTRODUCTION

THE publishers have done a useful work in reprinting the five papers on the Case-paper System which have been read at Poor Law Conferences during the last six years, and I think that every Guardian of the Poor, when he reads about the beneficial results which have followed upon the introduction of the system into the Unions mentioned, will be led to work for its introduction into his own Union. The system has received the approval of the recent Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, and its universal adoption is recommended. Its superiority over the present system of merely entering applications for relief, together with such particulars of the case as the law requires to be given, in the Application and Report Book is there stated as follows (paragraph 299):—

"Under the ordinary system no continuous record is kept of an applicant and his family; at every application he is entered

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afresh in the Application and Report Book of the relieving officer, and when this book is not indexed it depends entirely upon the memory of the relieving officer how much of the applicant's past history is brought before the Guardians. When a new relieving officer succeeds to the work, the cases to him are all new, and unless he goes through the Application and Report Books of his predecessor he has no means of tracing their previous history. Under the Case-paper System every application is recorded on the same set of papers, which thus constitute a running history of the case; every set of case-papers is indexed, and can be turned up by any one who is dealing with the case; into whatever institution the applicant may be sent his history goes with him. The system takes some trouble to start, but once initiated it is generally acknowledged to be much more effective and more simple than the old."

While the credit of inaugurating the Case-paper System in its present form must be awarded to the Paddington Board of Guardians, and to the efforts of its able clerk, Mr. H. F. Aveling, one of the contributors to the present volume, the ground was first broken by the late Sir Baldwyn Leighton, the first Chairman of the Atcham Board of Guardians (1838–1871), some sixty-five years ago. And as illustrating the

change of attitude in regard to it by the Central Authority, his son wrote to me in 1894 that it was so little appreciated by that body, "that one inspector actually tried to stop it, and I believe up to this day (certainly when I was chairman ten years ago) we had to keep two sets of books." [1] In the Whitchurch Union (Hants), also, by means of a "record book" which was started about the same time, the previous history of every applicant for relief was easily ascertainable. This book was always before the guardians at their meetings; and it is, by the way, an interesting fact, told to me by the late Chairman of this Board, Sir Wyndham Portal, that the book showed to what a large extent pauperism was hereditary in families, from grandfather to father, and from father to son.

The system seems to be slowly spreading from Union to Union, encouraged now by the Inspectors of the Local Government Board. Thus Ecclesall Bierlow adopted it in 1904, Kensington in 1905, and Woodbridge (a rural Union in Suffolk) in 1907, with most satisfactory results; and

[1] The Atcham system is described in the Report of the South Eastern Poor Law Conference of 1894, pp. 214–217, also in my "Better Administration of the Poor Law" pp. 30–32. It is still pursued in the Union, and every 'case' which has received relief since 1837 is recorded in about thirty-six books with indexes.

this shows it to be as applicable to rural as to urban Unions, and that, where the will exists to establish it, the way is easily found. The forms used in the Woodbridge Union are set out in the Appendix (p. 159).

But, as Miss James remarks in her excellent paper, the system is bound to be a failure unless Guardians and officers work at it in a keen and mutually sympathetic spirit. If this is not forthcoming, it may be preferable to continue the present system, for bad laws well administered are better than good laws badly administered. Nor must the system be looked upon as any remedy for pauperism, although if it be properly worked, it is certain to reduce pauperism, as the statistics given in the papers so clearly show. Its great advantages are that it can ensure better and more efficient relief work, a more close co-operation between legal and voluntary charity which is so much to be desired, the certainty that the relief given will be adequate to the necessities of the case, the detection of fraud and imposture on the part of applicants, and last but not least, as Miss Brodie Hall points out, the better protection of children. I sincerely hope, however, that the Central Authority will not make the adoption of the system obligatory on Boards of Guardians; for, unless the ground is properly prepared for its introduction, such a step can only do harm. If it is such a

good system as the following papers allege it to be, and as I am firmly convinced myself it is, it is bound to make its way by virtue of its own merits and without compulsion. It is quite certain, also, that those Boards of Guardians which do adopt the system will not be inclined to abandon it again, when once it has been got into working order.

W. CHANCE.

ORCHARDS, GODALMING,
September 14, 1909.

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The Case-Paper System

THE CASE-PAPER SYSTEM AT PADDINGTON

By Mr. HENRY F. AVELING,
Clerk to the Guardians, Paddington Parish.

1. Why it was Adopted.

The Case-Paper System of recording particulars as to applicants for and recipients of Poor Law relief was adopted by the Paddington Board of Guardians in January 1890.

For some years previously it had been found that much of the valuable information collected by the relieving officers at a large expenditure of time and trouble, was deprived of its value by being entered in Application and Report Books, which, when filled up, were of necessity laid aside to be replaced by new books, in which the particulars had either to be written afresh or found by reference to previous books. The latter was the easier method for the relieving officer, but not for the Chairman of the Relief Committee, before

whom were placed several Application and Report Books when an old case came under consideration.

The unhappy Chairman had to refer to previous entries, using all his fingers as bookmarkers, and give the Committee, as best he could, the particulars which had from time to time been recorded by the relieving officer in connection with the case.

It was felt that the Guardians ought to have before them the whole history of the applicant as it was presented in the records, without the cumbersome process of reference above described, but this could not be effected without voluminous transcripts from books which had been filled and stored away.

Amongst the details of information which the Poor Law authorities require the relieving officer to submit to the Guardians in the Application and Report Book, it is his duty to enter the "names of relatives liable by law to relieve the applicant, distinguishing those apparently capable of assisting the applicant," and in a footnote to the Schedule of the Order of the Poor Law Board prescribing the form of the Application and Report Book, the Board remark, "This information will enable the Guardians to direct against whom application for orders of maintenance shall be made under 43 Eliz., c. 2, s. 7" (and other Statutes).

To comply fully with this requirement the

relieving officer must give in addition to the names of the liable relatives such further details as may be necessary to enable the Guardians to form a judgment as to their ability to contribute. For example, their occupation and earnings, the number of their children, the rent they pay, the liabilities they are under, whether they are maintaining or assisting to maintain any other relatives, &c., &c. All these particulars must be given as to each liable relative, and, however often the application is renewed, the whole of this information should be re-entered in the Application and Report Book, involving an enormous amount of clerical labour.

Even if all the information in the relieving officer's possession had been entered on each occasion, there was no provision in the scheme laid down by the General Consolidated Orders for the preservation of correspondence connected with the case in a handy and accessible form. Letters written by the relieving officer would be kept in his department, letters written by the Clerk would be kept by him, and reports by the collector as to liable relatives would be kept in his office. The correspondence could not be inserted in the Application and Report Book.

It was further the duty of the relieving officer to enter in the Application and Report Book particulars as to any relief received by

the applicant from charitable sources, under the heading " Regular or temporary relief, and any other and what relief from clubs, charitable institutions, Government pensions, or otherwise ; such relief, pension, allowance or contribution to be described, and the amount stated " ; and the Guardians required the relieving officers to make careful inquiries under this head. They were thus brought into constant communication with various local voluntary agencies for charitable relief ; and in April 1885 an agreement was entered into between the Board of Guardians and the Parochial Relief Committee of one of the Paddington Churches, whereby it was arranged that cases which the Guardians considered more suitable for private charity than for the Poor Law should be referred to the Church Committee for assistance, and *vice versâ*. Similar agreements were subsequently entered into between the Guardians and the Local Committee of the Charity Organisation Society and three other Parochial Relief Committees. Specimens of the agreements are appended.

As the result of the greater attention thus bestowed on individual cases, the Guardians began to realise the importance of adopting some definite rules for their guidance in dealing with applications for relief. The rules were at first unwritten, and it was not until

the year 1889 that they were formally adopted, and then they were laid down only for the guidance of the Relief Committee and not as hard and fast laws which might not be departed from.

With regard to outdoor relief the rules referred to provided that it should not (with certain specified exceptions) be given to:

(*a*.) Single able-bodied men.

(*b*.) Single able-bodied women with or without illegitimate children.

(*c*.) Widows with illegitimate children.

(*d*.) Able-bodied widows without children.

(*e*.) Women who, during the twelve months prior to application, have become widows, and who, on the death of their husbands, have received money from a club, insurance society, or other sources which, in the opinion of the Relief Committee or the Board, has been lavishly spent in mourning or funeral expenses or has been otherwise improperly expended. (*Note*.—The actual burial expenses should not exceed £5.)

(*f*.) Destitute undeserving persons.

Out-relief may be granted to aged and infirm persons who:

(1.) Are deserving at the time of application.

(2.) Have shown signs of thrift.

(3.) Have no relations legally or morally bound and able to support them.

(4.) Are unable to obtain sufficient assistance from charitable sources.

To this rule there is the following note :

Note.—Such outdoor relief shall not be in supplementation of relief from charitable societies, but shall be in itself adequate for the necessities of the applicant, who shall be required to desist from drawing relief from any charitable societies, such term " charitable societies " not to be taken to include a clergyman or minister of any denomination who distributes the funds entrusted to him by his congregation.

The rules also provide for the cases of able-bodied men with families and widows of good character.

Steps were taken to make the rules widely known amongst the poor, and copies of them were printed in large type and exhibited at the Relief Office and elsewhere. So far from preventing deserving persons from applying for relief, the result was a distinct increase in co-operation between private charity and the Poor Law to the advantage of deserving applicants.

The Case-paper System was the natural development of this line of action.

2. Description of the Case-paper.

The case-paper consists of a form containing all the headings prescribed in the

Application and Report Book, with some slight additions which have been found useful.

The headings are printed vertically on three pages of foolscap, thus allowing ample space for entering full details.

This form is filled up by the relieving officer when application is made to him by a person for the first time.

If the applicant has applied for relief in Paddington on a previous occasion, and a case-paper is already in existence, the relieving officer enters particulars of the renewed application on page 4, carefully noting any change of circumstances that may have occurred since the previous application was made. Each subsequent application is dealt with in similar manner, fresh continuation sheets being inserted as required.

The case-papers are indexed on what is known as the "card system," the method being to enter the name and number of each case on a separate card. These cards are preserved in a drawer-cabinet, and they are placed in the drawers in strictly alphabetical order. It is therefore but the work of a few minutes for the clerk in charge of them to inform the relieving officer whether or not there is already a case-paper relating to the applicant.

A "summary" form is placed above the case-paper, and on it the relieving officer

enters the name of the applicant, together with the date and the nature of the application. After the application has been considered by the Relief Committee, a note of the Committee's order or decision is appended by the Chairman.

When the page is full a fresh one is placed above it, and consequently the most recent order of the Guardians is always uppermost.

If the relieving officer ascertains that the applicant has relatives liable for his maintenance residing in the parish, he proceeds to make inquiries as to their circumstances, and enters the information collected on forms designed for the purpose (a separate form being used for each liable relative). He appends these forms to the case-paper and submits them to the Relief Committee with the application.

If the liable relatives reside beyond the limits of the parish, the Relief Committee direct the general relieving officer to make the inquiries and to fill up the forms.

If the liable relatives reside at a distance from London the forms are sent to the Guardians of the distant Union with a request for their relieving officer's report, and the favour is reciprocated by the Paddington Board whenever opportunity occurs.

All these forms are appended to the case-papers, as also are the certificates given by the district medical officer.

There is another form which is sent by the relieving officer to the Charity Organisation Society or the Parochial Relief Committee for the purpose of obtaining information (if any be available) as to the relief received by the applicant from charitable sources. Replies are generally received in time for the meeting of the Relief Committee, and they are appended to the case-paper and submitted with the application.

Any letters received in connection with the case and press copies of letters written are also appended, and when the application is brought before the Committee the Chairman is able to give the Committee a full and succinct account of the whole matter.

None of the labour involved in filling up these forms is wasted, for when the applicant applies again the information collected is ready at hand and has not to be re-entered.

The number of repetition applications is very large. During last year the total number of applications submitted to the Relief Committee by the relieving officers at Paddington was 4,111, and of this number only 1,667 (or about two-fifths) were fresh applications, the remainder, 2,444 (or about three-fifths), being repetition applications as to which particulars had previously been collected.

On the inauguration of the system the Guardians called upon the relieving officers to pre-

pare a case-paper only for fresh applications, but the system so soon commended itself to all concerned that it was not long before a "case-paper" had been written up for all the persons in receipt of relief. When this was accomplished the Guardians would have relieved the officers of the duty of keeping the Application and Report Books, but the Local Government Board were not prepared to sanction the proposal.

The books have accordingly been retained, but the experience of thirteen years has shown that, where case-papers are also kept, the books are practically useless.

The Guardians are now renewing their request to be allowed to dispense with the Application and Report Book and to substitute a book resembling the Relief Order Book, to be called the "Application and Decision Book," merely for the purpose of preserving in the Relief Office a chronological record of applications made to the Relief Committee and the decisions thereon.

The Local Government Board have the matter under consideration.

3. Advantages of the Case-paper System.

The case-papers are invaluable to the earnest Guardian who is seeking to arrive at some definite principles to guide him in the

difficult task of adjudicating upon the applications which come before him, for they contain not only a complete history of the applicant but a full record of the decisions of the Guardians on previous occasions, showing the results of the policy adopted in dealing with the case, and members of the Board elected since the inauguration of the system sometimes ask the question, "How did the Guardians manage before the case-papers were adopted?"

The records which these papers present may not be acceptable to undeserving applicants, who would prefer to tell a different story on each fresh occasion, but they are appreciated by the deserving poor whose efforts to provide for themselves are chronicled and kept in remembrance.

It is not always easy to realise how difficult it is for an aged applicant, when ushered into a Board-room, to give clear replies to the questions put first from one quarter and then from another, and probably the very persons whom the Guardians would be most inclined to help are least able through nervousness to speak for themselves.

When there are no case-papers much depends upon the information which the relieving officer can give verbally at the moment, and when a relieving officer has a large number of applicants passing before him every week

it cannot be expected that his memory will be capable of doing justice to each one of them.

On the other hand, where case-papers are used the relieving officer enters in writing the observations which he would otherwise give to the Relief Committee by word of mouth, and this enhances their value.

The poor soon get to know and appreciate this, and it sometimes happens that, bewildered by the questions put to them, they will remark, "You have got it all written down."

The relieving officers, too, when asked about So-and-so, will say, "Please let me see the case-paper," for in it they will probably find a remark which will enable them to give the necessary reply.

The Case-paper System consequently has the advantage of training all concerned—Guardians, poor, and officers alike—to be accurate, and the result is a more just and scientific method of Poor Law administration. This can scarcely fail to prove of advantage to the poor, for they are quick to learn the principles upon which the Guardians act in administering relief.

Whatever differences of opinion may exist as to the merits or demerits of one or other "policy" of Poor Law relief, all Poor Law workers are probably agreed that it is extremely undesirable for Guardians to exhibit

any variation of method or treatment in dealing with the same case or cases of a similar nature. A settled policy, whether it be liked or not, can be understood, but variable treatment is speedily recognised and properly considered unjust.

The co-operation existing between the Guardians and voluntary societies prevents overlapping of relief through each being ignorant of the other's doings, and also has the advantage of frequently securing private help for deserving persons and saving them from the disqualifications attendant upon Poor Law relief.

This action of the Guardians has been sometimes thought to be a shirking of their responsibilities, but, as the terms of the agreements show, they are fully aware of their legal obligations and are always ready to meet them. They hold the belief, however, that charity has its responsibilities as well as the Poor Law, and they have had many opportunities of noting with pleasure the response readily forthcoming when attention has been called to the duty.

The Case-paper System also assists in acquiring information as to the causes of pauperism.

One of the questions which the relieving officer is required to answer in the Application and Report Book is " Present cause of seek-

ing relief." The reply which is generally entered is "Destitution" or "Illness," but the case-paper provides an opportunity for the relieving officer to give particulars of a much more useful character, and the information which is now being collected in the case-papers will in time throw a considerable light upon the causes of pauperism.

The general adoption of the Case-paper System might render possible a more accurate method of compiling the statistics of pauperism than exists at present.

Many of my readers will remember the paper read by Mr. Charles Booth before the Royal Statistical Society in 1891.

Under the heading of Statistics of Pauperism, Mr. Booth said:

"I wish to urge the desirability of such changes being made in the methods of official tabulation as shall cause the returns to show, more accurately than they do now, the whole volume of pauperism and something of its character.

"In former times a return was made to the Local Government Board, from each Union, giving the total number of persons relieved from Lady Day to Michaelmas, and Michaelmas to Lady Day, in connection with the numbers actually receiving relief on January 1st and July 1st. For some years past these returns have not been demanded, and for years

earlier no use was made of them. There is a great possibility of error in such returns, as the strictest care is necessary to avoid a duplication of entries, which will have the effect of making the volume of pauperism appear much larger than it actually is; and we may assume that no use was made of these figures because of the probability of error in them. In basing their returns solely on the number of those in receipt of relief at any one time, it must be admitted that the Local Government Board stands on firm ground. To go further than this without running into error involves many difficulties, but I venture to think that these difficulties can be overcome, and it is the more necessary that they should be faced, because, for lack of reliable official data, very misleading estimates have been made as to the total amount of pauperism indicated by the published figures.

"It has been usual to say that the pauperism of the day must be multiplied three or three and a half times to give the pauperism of the year. Mr. Mulhall, in his 'Dictionary of Statistics,' comparing English with Continental pauperism, says that the actual number on one day may be taken as one-third of the whole. He gives no authority, but may perhaps lean upon some figures published by Mr. Pashley when writing on

pauperism and Poor Law. Mr. Pashley relied upon information not of a very complete or convincing character privately obtained from certain Unions in 1851. Then again, Mr. Dudley Baxter, writing on 'The National Income,' gives the ratio of $3\frac{1}{2}$, and says he obtained the figures from which this ratio is deduced from Mr. Purdy, of the Statistical Department of the Local Government Board, the return applying to 1857, and being, Mr. Baxter says, the only one of the kind ever made."

In the following year a Parliamentary Return was prepared showing the number of paupers of different ages relieved on January 1, 1892, and during the year ended at Lady Day, 1892.

In commenting upon the Return in their Annual Report for 1892-93, the Local Government Board remarked as follows :—

"The preparation and examination of the Return entailed a great amount of labour on the Poor Law Officers and on our Department. In some cases the Guardians found it necessary to employ a special clerical staff to classify the names of the individuals relieved during the year, so as to avoid duplicate reckonings of the same persons, and to secure accuracy in the other details required for the purposes of the Return.

"In order as far as practicable to ensure

the correctness of the Return, we drew the special attention of Boards of Guardians to the directions contained in the Order of the House of Commons for avoiding duplicate reckonings, and ourselves gave further detailed instructions for the purpose of securing an exact computation of the number of persons who received relief during the year.

"It appeared from the Return that the number of paupers, exclusive of vagrants and lunatics in asylums, registered hospitals, and licensed houses, in receipt of relief on January 1, 1892, was 700,746, and that the total number relieved during the year ended Lady Day 1892 was 1,573,074. The total number relieved during the year was therefore not much more than twice as large as the number in receipt of relief on the 1st of January."

The case-papers were found exceedingly useful in preventing duplicate entries in Paddington.

4. The Revision of Indoor Cases.

The adoption of case-papers at Paddington enabled the Guardians to inaugurate a very complete system of revision of the case of every person receiving indoor as well as outdoor relief.

A Standing Committee (now called the "Revision Committee") was appointed for the

purpose of revising indoor cases, including lunatics in asylums, children in schools, and special cases in outlying institutions.

It had always been the practice in granting outdoor relief to make the allowance available for a limited period, but before the introduction of the case-papers there was no systematic revision of the cases of persons receiving indoor relief.

Occasionally a " call-over " was ordered by the Board, when an attempt was made to pass in review the present circumstances of the inmates and to ascertain the financial position of their liable relatives ; but it was difficult to organise a periodical call-over for the reason that the particulars respecting each case had to be searched for amongst the innumerable entries in the Application and Report Books. The introduction of case-papers, containing these particulars at a glance, made it an easy matter to arrange for a certain number of cases to be revised at each meeting as in the case of persons receiving outdoor relief. The adoption of this method enables the Guardians to keep in touch with the varying circumstances of the liable relatives of persons in receipt of relief. It often happens that relatives who were unable to assist at the beginning of chargeability become capable of doing so later on, and the frequent references to the case-papers which this revision

ensures brings to light many facts of this nature.

It is hardly to be expected that relatives whose circumstances are improving should volunteer assistance to the rates, especially if the aged inmates are comfortable in Workhouse or Infirmary; and it is only natural that a mother whose children were sent to the district school at a time when she was unable to provide for them should not be in a hurry to relieve the ratepayers of their burden when her circumstances have improved.

The results have been most satisfactory from all points of view, morally and financially.

5. Co-operation with Charity.

The work of the Revision Committee is not confined to the task of ascertaining the means of liable relatives, but they consider each case before them with a view of effecting some permanent benefit for the inmate.

Every effort is made to enlist the sympathies of the various charitable organisations on behalf of cases which the Guardians consider more suitable for private charity than for the Poor Law, and when they are asked to assist a case, the case-paper is sent for their information.

For instance, the Church Army, the Sal-

vation Army, and the managers of the Training Colonies are asked to assist men and women of the able-bodied class, and the results are sufficiently encouraging to prompt the Guardians to further efforts in this direction. They have accordingly caused the following notice to be printed on cards and suspended in each cell of the casual wards :—

NOTICE.

> The Guardians will be glad to consider the case of any inmate who is desirous of making a fresh start in life, and is willing to enter one of the Church Army Labour Homes or the Salvation Army Labour Colony.
>
> Application should be made to the Superintendent of the Wards, or to the Clerk to the Guardians, at the Offices, 313-319 Harrow Road, W.

It was in reference to such a case as this that the Guardians received a reply from which the following is an extract, viz. : "I cannot close this note without an expression of surprise and admiration at the unlimited patience and perseverance of the Paddington Board in endeavouring to wisely place this youth."

6. Concluding Remarks.

It is not intended that the case-paper system is a remedy for pauperism, but it is believed by the Paddington Guardians to be an indispensable factor in dealing with the difficulty.

In the treatment of the sick poor the medical officers of large infirmaries know the value of the clinical notes which are carefully recorded and indexed for reference in the case of every patient entering the wards, and similarly do the Guardians and their officers appreciate the utility of the case-papers.

Whenever a question arises at a meeting of the Board or of any of the Committees with reference to a person in receipt of relief, the first step is to consult the case-paper, for without it the Guardians would feel that they were voting in the dark.

The interest which the case-papers have awakened in the minds of all concerned has been so great that no pains are spared to provide the means for those who are anxious to regain their independence, and to assist those whose physical condition unfortunately renders this impossible. This interest extends beyond the confines of the Relief Committee-room, and the idea is growing that Poor Law work should be curative as well as helpful.

Under the case-paper system the causes of

pauperism are made more manifest, and Guardians become better armed to counteract those causes.

In Paddington an association for supplying the poor with healthy homes, and a registry for bringing together employers and women daily workers, illustrate some of the results that can ensue from Guardians recognising in their work means by which they may improve the condition of the poor.

ADDENDA.

Agreement between the Paddington Board of Guardians and the St. Paul's Parochial Relief Committee.

The Board of Guardians to send each week a list of persons residing in St. Paul's district whose cases have come before the Board during the week; also the decision of the Board in each case; and, inasmuch as such list would not be considered by the St. Paul's Relief Committee until the following Tuesday, the Board to give, if necessary, *ad interim* relief for one week. The list to be sent to the Hon. Sec., St. Paul's Relief Committee, 46, Waverley Road, W.

The St. Paul's Relief Committee to inquire into, and, if deserving, relieve adequately, so far as their means will allow, all cases in St. Paul's district which may be referred to them by the Guardians as suitable for relief from private charity rather than from the Poor Law. Also to furnish the relieving officer with such information as he may require as to the circumstances of residents in St. Paul's district who may apply for assistance to the Guardians, and who are known to the St. Paul's Relief Committee. If the St. Paul's Relief Committee find they are unable to provide adequate relief in any deserving case, they will either obtain co-operation from the Charity Organisation Society, or failing that will refer such cases back to the Board of Guardians to be dealt

with wholly by them. The St. Paul's Relief Committee will in no case supplement out-relief in any fresh cases.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PADDINGTON BOARD OF GUARDIANS AND THE CHARITY ORGANISATION COMMITTEE.

Resolution passed by the Guardians in reference to co-operation with the Paddington Committee of the Charity Organisation Society, viz. :—

That, after the relieving officers have made their inquiries, and before the meeting of the Relief Committee, it be an instruction to them to take a list of the applicants for out-relief, together with particulars of any other application that the relieving officers may deem advisable, to the Secretary of the Charity Organisation Committee, with a view of obtaining any information in the possession of the Committee respecting any of such applicants.

The following general instruction was also issued to the relieving officers, viz. :—

That the relieving officers, whilst continuing as hitherto to make their own inquiries, be instructed to send at once to the Charity Organisation Society and to the Parochial Relief Committees the names and addresses of applicants who, in their opinion, appear to be deserving under No. 7 of the Relief Rules, with a view to their cases being immediately taken into consideration by such Society or Committee.

PARISH OF PADDINGTON.

Date of First Application 190 .

Names of Applicant and Wife.	Age.	When Born.	Where Born.	Religious Persuasion.
Names of Children under 16 dependent on them.	Age.	When born.	Where born.	Religious persuasion, and when and where baptized.
Names of Children not dependent on them.	Age.	Married or Single.	Address.	Occupation.

If Child, whether Orphan, Deserted, or Illegitimate? ... ...

If Adult, whether Single, Married, Widow, or Widower? ... ...

Date and Place of Marriage* ... ...

Wife's Maiden Name ... ...

Name of Husband or Wife (if dead) ... ...

Occupation of ditto ... ...

Date and Place of his or her Death ... ...

When and where last Chargeable ... ...

* In the case of a Child, particulars as to the Parents' Marriage should be given.

CONTINUATION—Page 2. Dated 190

Residence, and how long there ... ...

Rent, and amount due ... ...

How long resident in the Parish without relief or interruption, giving particulars of Residences and corroborative evidence. Also rent owing (if any) ... ...

Present or previous Occupation of Applicant and Earnings ... ...

Present or previous Occupation of Husband (or Wife) and Earnings ... ...

If ordinarily able-bodied? ... ...

If partially or wholly Disabled, and the description of the disability? ... ...

Present cause of seeking Relief ... ...

If Applicant is in Debt, nature of Debts covered by Bill of Sale, Pawn Tickets, &c.? ... ...

Club, Benefit, or Trade Society ... ...

Whether receiving any, and if so what Relief from Clubs, Charitable Institutions, Government Pensions, or otherwise ...

Whether Life Insured?... ... ...

Name of Society... ... ...

Amount due at Death ... ...

Amount of Premium ... ...

Persons to whom nominated ... ...

Person holding the Policy ... ...

CONTINUATION—Page 3. Dated 190 .

Name of nearest Relative or Friend ... ...

Relationship of ditto ... ...

Address of ditto ... ...

Occupation of ditto ... ...

Particulars of other Members of the Family chargeable to this or any other Parish ...

Names, Addresses, and Financial Circumstances of—

(*a*) Liable Relatives other than those mentioned on page 1 ...

(*b*) Other Relatives assisting or able to assist ... ...

Source of information ... ...

REMARKS *

Signed Relieving Officer.

* If more space is required, a Continuation Sheet should be inserted between pages 3 and 4.

CONTINUATION—Page 4.

PARTICULARS AS TO SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT APPLICATIONS, OR AS TO CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

DATE.	PRESENT RESIDENCE.

(C.) *PARISH OF PADDINGTON.*

Name

PARISH OF PADDINGTON.

No.

Guardians' Offices, 313–319 Harrow Road, W.

Date.	Nature of Application and Order of Committee.	Initials of Chairman or Clerk.

THE HISTORY SHEET OR CASE-PAPER SYSTEM

By Miss MARY E. E. JAMES

THE HISTORY SHEET OR CASE-PAPER SYSTEM

By Miss MARY E. E. JAMES,
Guardian, Bethnal Green Parish.

A FEW weeks ago I heard a well-known philanthropist and social reformer, speaking at a public meeting, say: "Year by year I feel increasingly that before I can really help my brother (much as I may wish to do so) I must know what he really wants. I must know him, understand him, and all his circumstances; or else, while trying to help him, I may really be doing him a great harm."

The way in which this problem is to be met in the sphere of pure philanthropy is not our affair to-day, but if we are to do our duty as guardians, we are bound to try to solve it in the sphere of Poor Law administration, and the object of this paper is to lay before you the working of that method known as the "History-sheet System," which, if properly carried out, affords all the detailed information necessary for the working out of this solution.

The Bethnal Green Board adopted the History-sheet System from the Paddington Guardians four years ago, and at the same time, there being a vacancy on our staff, we were fortunate enough to secure the services of Mr. Emerson, a most capable officer, who thoroughly understood the practical working of the system, having been for some time assistant relieving officer at Paddington. We began gradually, each Relieving Officer writing a History Sheet for all his new cases and five or six of his old ones. Now every case has a full History Sheet. We decided to call them "History Sheets" rather than "Case Papers," as we preferred that title for many reasons.

Before saying anything about the History Sheet itself, I will begin by laying it down that it is absolutely essential, in order to secure uniformity of administration, that all cases applying for relief for the first time should be taken by the Chairman of the Board, in a Committee of the whole Board, at the time when sectional Committees are not sitting, and that the Chairman should never fail in his attendance. In Bethnal Green our Chairman usually retains his office for two years, and rare indeed have been the occasions when a Vice-Chairman has reigned in his stead for even a few hours.

Some copies of the History Sheet used in

Bethnal Green, which is a slight modification of the sheet used in Paddington, have been distributed in the room, reference to which will at once show what the History Sheet is, and the kind of information which it aims at giving. That information is not so very different to, though rather more extensive than, that which a careful Officer would put in his Application and Report Book, but the great advantage is, that here you have it in a separate form. You clothe, as it were, the bare bones of crude facts with the flesh of a living individuality, and the History Sheet becomes to the keen Guardian and Officer the very embodiment of the case, of the individual and all his family. This brings me to the first point to which I would draw your attention :

The Underlying Principle of the History Sheet.

The History Sheet emphasises the fundamental principle of all corporate action by placing the Family in its proper position, as the indivisible unit in civil life. As the individual is the unit out of which the Family is built, so the Family is the unit out of which the State is built. As the dismemberment of the body means the dissolution of the individual, so the dismemberment of the Family

means the ultimate death of the State. This is a principle which must ever rule our actions both in private and public life. An undying truth underlies that old Mosaic law, "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee"; and whenever Man considers himself above Law, and ceases to have his actions governed by those principles by which, as a rational being, he is intended to order his life, he instantly finds himself in a worse position than what we call the "lower animals," who, being without reason, are ever guided in their actions by an unerring instinct.

The second point I would take is:

The Temper in which the History-sheet System must be Worked.

The System is bound to be a failure unless Guardians and Officers work at it in a keen and mutually sympathetic spirit. Without much hard work on the part of both, it would be absolutely hopeless to attempt the History Sheet. Of course it is not necessary that all the Guardians on a Board should be equally interested; but there must be a few really keen ones or the Officers will lose heart, and the result will be a merely perfunctory filling in of reams of paper with more or less accurate information, whereas

the History Sheet is intended to lead to the close personal knowledge by Officers and Guardians of every single person that is or ever has been under their care—of their circumstances, their children, their relatives, their illnesses, what is the probable cause of their immersion in the slough of pauperism, what is the likelihood of their ever getting out of it.

Three typical History Sheets will illustrate what I mean :

1. The family left orphans.
2. The regular " in-and-out " case.
3. The " deserted " case.

H.S. 6377. Frederick Sparuls, forty-seven ; Rachel Sparuls, thirty-seven.

On April 4, 1902, this family of husband, wife, and three children became chargeable. He was an undertaker's coachman, no club, but insured threepence per week for the family. The first entry is :

4/4/02. For relief, husband sick, and unable to work. Relief in kind given, husband to be summoned when well.

14/4/02. Husband was admitted to Victoria Park Chest Hospital.

15/4/02. Another child born, and relief in kind continued, until

23/5/02. Eliza and Arthur admitted for the schools. Arthur ill, and admitted to infirmary.

7/6/02. Husband admitted to the infirmary.

2/8/02. A doctor's order for woman and infant.

14/8/02. Burial order for infant.

18/12/02. The woman admitted to infirmary suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis.

17/2/03. Husband died in the infirmary of pulmonary tuberculosis.

17/9/03. Wife died in the infirmary of pulmonary tuberculosis.

That, I am sorry to say, is a not uncommon History Sheet. These children, who are now in our schools, will probably turn out well, as their coming under the Poor Law was, so to speak, an accident, owing to their father's premature death; and even if the heredity were bad, their entire separation from bad environment generally ensures this class of child doing well, if only their own health continues good. Incidentally, too, this case illustrates the value of History Sheets in the systematic study of disease, the death of husband and wife of consumption within a few months of one another being a noteworthy feature, and not an uncommon one.

The next case is very different.

THE CASE OF J—— W——.

James, forty-two, a labourer, his wife Mary Anne, thirty-five, and five children.

This is not a mere History Sheet. It is

a Classic ! It is one of our earliest Sheets, but owing to renumbering it is now History Sheet 3915. This case soon began to present such interesting features that the Creed Register was searched in order to see what had happened before the advent of History Sheets, with the result that we found that between November 15, 1892, and December 5, 1900 (eight years), Mr. and Mrs. W. and family had been in and out forty-four times ; but as they didn't always come in *en famille*, their eldest son James, aged ten, had established a little record of his own, having been in and out fifty-five times in six years ! John, aged seven, and Edward, aged four months, had both been born in the House. I may mention that the confiding, not to say affectionate, air of these children, when they come before any Committee, is most quaint. They evidently look on Guardians as part of the recognised order of things.

We now start fair with the History Sheet : 10/7/00. "Admitted to House." From that day to this that entry is repeated twenty-two times with the mathematical variations of which the number seven is capable : "Man, wife, and five children," "Wife and three children," "Man," &c., &c.

There are various admissions to and from the infirmary, and poor little Tommy, aged five, died in 1901. Once we had the man

arrested, and he got "two months"; but it was more with a view to trying to make him maintain himself and his family, than because we really thought he would desert them, which I don't believe he would ever do. Another curious feature of this case is that the children always come in fat, clean, and well-cared-for. When out they make a very good thing of it "hopping," pea-picking, &c. However, we have rather spoilt this by adopting James and John, the two eldest, and James is, I hope, establishing a record of another kind on board the *Exmouth*, where he is doing very well.

The whole family are now once more, under their *sixty-seventh* admission order, comfortably established under our wing, and we have every reason to believe that ere long another baby face will smile on the kind Guardians.

The History Sheet of F. B., thirty-six, his wife, Frances, twenty-seven, and their two children, George and Herbert, first appears June 20, 1901, but that was by no means their own first appearance, as Herbert was born in the Workhouse August 19, 1899.

These are the chief details:

H.S. 6674. F. B., thirty-six, wife Frances, twenty-seven, and children, George, four, and Herbert, one. This man is a fireworks maker.

20/6/01. Workhouse order for woman and two children.

2/7/01. Warrant ordered for husband—"Neglect to maintain."

7/01. Wife allowed out to try and find her husband. She was only out a few days.

31/8/01. Another child, Rose, born in the Workhouse.

10/3/02. Wife discharged, having been in nearly a year.

4/02. Outdoor relief to wife.

6/6/02. Rose admitted to infirmary.

7/6/02. Husband arrested, "one month hard."

5/7/03. Christine is born. Mother has relief in kind.

19/5/03, Rose admitted to infirmary.

25/5/03. Rose dies in infirmary (Herbert had already died outside).

2/6/03. Man having been repeatedly summoned by Board and failing to appear, warrant again ordered.

June and July. More relief in kind given to wife, who continued very weak after the birth of Christine.

I have chosen this case because of the heartless cruelty of the man, who, himself in perfect health and with a good trade, leaves his wife, at the best of times a poor little creature, with their dying child and new-born infant. Incidentally, too, it shows the evil of giving Out-relief to a deserted wife.

Now my experience is that before the intro-

duction of the History Sheets, when a case came before the Board for relief—the last case say—something like this would happen. Some one would remark, "Let's see, F. B.? I remember that name somehow. Didn't we have him up before, and there was something about his grandfather having a piano?" (We all know that trick of memory by which we recall the greater fact through the less.) But X. Y., who had not any unusual circumstances, such as a piano in the family, to fix him in our memories, when his name came up, all that was known of him was buried in the Application and Report Book of quite another Officer than the one who had the pleasure of dealing with him this last time; and whereas F. B.'s delinquencies will be more or less accurately remembered, X. Y. can tell any fairy tale he likes. But now with X. Y. and F. B. alike, comes the History Sheet, which, ruthless as fate, deals out an even-handed justice in the revelations they contain concerning them both.

There is a weird sort of fascination in thinking of the tragedy, the comedy, the pathos locked up in those business-like pigeon-holes of the History Sheet Clerk, but I must pass on, and this little discursion really brings me to my third point, namely:

The Details of how to Work the History Sheet System.

We have already seen that Officers and Guardians alike must be really keen, and especially the Chairman and Clerk to the Board; in fact, without the whole-hearted co-operation of the Clerk, such as we have had from Mr. Thomas, it would be the most hopelessly uphill work for every one. The assistance of the Master, the Medical Superintendent, and the Superintendent of the schools is also very important to make the system work really well; but above all, you must have a History Sheet Clerk to attend to the History Sheets and nothing else. At Bethnal Green, all History Sheets are kept in proper cases, somewhat like bookshelves, in a gallery running across one end of the Relief Hall. Whenever an application is made, the Relieving Officer makes inquiries of the History Sheet Clerk whether there is an existing Sheet. In four years our History Sheets number over 10,000, filed on what is called the "Shannon Card Index" system. If there is a Sheet it is sent to the Officer. If there is not, the Relieving Officer admitting makes one out, and from that time forward case and History Sheet are wed; and woe betide the luckless Relieving Officer who introduces discord in the shape of a duplicate History Sheet, having failed

to discover the old one, or to the individual (not always a Relieving Officer) who divorces the couple by losing the History Sheet. Such things do happen occasionally !

All new cases go before the Board for relief, which meets fortnightly at 10 a.m., and the Board alone grants out-relief to new cases, and settles questions of repayment. The Sectional Committees take the old cases in the afternoon at 2.30, and the Members re-assemble in the Board-room at 4 to take the G.R.O. and Collector's cases. There is no adjournment during the day. Persons admitted to the House come before the Settlement Committee, if to the Schools before both Settlement and School Committees, if to the Infirmary the Infirmary Sub-Committee ; but at the Infirmary the History Sheet alone appears, and not the patient. The Chairman endorses the resolution of the Committee on Sheet " A," initialling it. It is a small but very important detail that Officers as well as Guardians should always initial any entry they make. Of course each Committee has its own stamp for endorsing.

All " Settled " cases have a big " Bethnal Green " stamped across them, and all " Warrant " cases are stamped " Warrant " in one corner (a round stamp with red ink). Fraudulent cases have a blackened corner. Thus a good deal of classification is done at the first glance, and my fourth point is :

The Immediate Benefits of the History-sheet System.

And first of these I would place the simplifying of classification. I think I may fairly take it for granted that all of those to whom I am now speaking regard classification as one of the chief means towards good Poor Law administration. Of course, we all know that to prevent a person dying of destitution is the first object of the Poor Law ; but having kept your man alive, you have to dispose of him during the twenty-four hours of the day, and you ought to do it in such a way as to do the least harm to others with the greatest benefit to himself ; and so, first among the benefits of the History Sheet, I will put this simplifying of classification. To classify you first must *know*, and two minutes spent in looking through his History Sheet will fully acquaint you with all the main facts of a man's life, from his birth to the hour he is standing before you, including, most important detail, all medical certificates belonging to the case. This, especially when the illness of the head of the family is the cause of seeking relief, is one of the most important entries. Classification when in the House I shall not touch upon. That requires a paper to itself. As a matter of fact, in Bethnal Green we leave it to our most excellent Master and Matron.

Nor will I attempt to classify those whom we do relieve; but there is a most interesting classified list in my hand of those we *don't* relieve and don't want to relieve.

First, I have twelve cases—"Relief refused because not destitute." One of these

H.S. 5234. "A single woman in good health with £10 in her possession at the time she made her application."

Then eighteen cases—"The application withdrawn when relief was offered on loan." One of these

H.S. 6944. "A single man, thirty-eight, would not wait to see the doctor, because he was going to have a drink."

Next I have twenty-two cases—"Application for relief abandoned in consequence of having given false addresses"; and eight cases—"Application withdrawn because applicants objected to sons contributing," or else "in consequence of family quarrels."

Finally, twenty-one cases—"Applications withdrawn for other reasons," beginning with

H.S. 1670. "Builders' labourer for admission, *withdrawn* unless exempted from the *bath*";

and ending with

H.S. 5385. "Man in comfortable circumstances willing to pay for infirmary treatment, but did not want to be pauperised."

Now the probability is that the greater

part of these eighty-one cases are permanently choked off their craving to drink at the inexhaustible fount of the luckless ratepayers' much-begrudged and often hard-earned cash—a draught that, in this case, would bless neither him who gives nor him who takes. But suppose in a year or two's time the same idea inspired any of them again, then he and his History Sheet, with that awkward "drink," or "bath," or "£600 squandered in a few years," would come *together* before the Guardians, and help them to decide the case. This brings me to the *second* benefit of History Sheets.

It minimises the disadvantage of change of Board by election or otherwise. The new Guardian has the judgment of his predecessor and the data on which he based that judgment before him, instead of all past efforts to deal with the case being buried in oblivion, and the same holds good with regard to any change of Relieving Officers.

The fact, too, that their work is permanent heartens up both Guardians and Relieving Officers in this struggle against the rising tide of pauperism, which in our moments of depression we are tempted to look upon as very like wielding Mrs. Partington's mop.

A *third* benefit of the History Sheet is the finding out of weak spots in the administration generally. Genius has been defined as an

infinite capacity for taking pains, and as the most intricate and wondrous of harmonies is woven out of single notes by the master's hand, so a really efficient Poor Law administration must be woven out of small details, each perfect, each in its right place, and none lacking, and there is nothing like the History Sheet for making the absence of the missing detail apparent, and doing away with much duplicating of work by dropping the superfluous one. Imagine if ever since the Crimean War there had been History Sheets of errors kept at the War Office, but instead of H.S. 666, Bill Smith and his delinquencies, it had been the "History Sheet of Shoddy Shoes"; instead of John Jones, the "History Sheet of Remounts," instead of Dick Robinson, the "History Sheet of Rubbishy Ammunition"! Surely, with reams of such tabulated detail, added to daily for half a century, some of them would have been put right!

A *fourth* benefit, and a very important one, is the immense help it is, in what is really at once the most hopeful and the most vital part of our work—the children.

The readiness with which the Bethnal Green Board adopted the Paddington system of History Sheets was largely due to the fact that we already had a small History Sheet for each child, drawn up in 1895 by Mr. Hamilton, Clerk to the School Committee, who

has always taken a deep interest in the children. The idea owed its origin largely to the renewed interest in children which was awakened throughout the country about this time. Guardians were constantly being charged with failures in educational and physical matters connected with the children in cases in which they were perfectly helpless. The School Committee, therefore, decided to have a History Sheet for each child under their care, recording—

1. General history as to parentage, place of birth, &c.
2. Minute details as to physical condition upon admission.
3. Standard passed and educational qualifications.
4. A report of our own head school teacher as to child's general mental capacities.

These sheets were revised from time to time, and were found to be extremely useful throughout the child's career, so when the system adopted by Paddington of dealing with the head of the family was brought to the Guardians' notice in 1899, it needed little time to convince them that to follow on similar lines would be advantageous all round. The Children's History Sheets are still kept and revised by the superintendent of our

schools, and are regarded as supplementary to the one assigned to the head of the family.

But on the History Sheet of the Head of the Family you have the children's career grouped with that of their parents, so that matters such as the adoption of children by the Guardians, application to have children given into their custody by near relatives other than the parents, the whereabouts and doings of the mothers, being widows, and the best way of starting the child in life, can be considered with much greater advantage to the *individual* because of the knowledge of the *family* so readily and fully at the Guardians' command.

To sum up, you must not expect the History Sheet to work miracles. It will not abolish pauperism, but it will decrease it by choking off the loafer, the cadger, and all those who, while very far from the destitution that is thankful to creep for food and warmth and shelter into the Workhouse, are by no means averse to having a try to get anything that can be had for nothing, above all without working for it.

The Returns for Bethnal Green since the introduction of History Sheets are most interesting, and a whole paper might well be written to prove that History Sheets are what I personally believe them to be, viz., the very best means of ensuring a decrease of

pauperism without causing any hardship to the poor. The figures are as follows, comparing 1899, the year before History Sheets were in use, with 1903:

MEAN NUMBERS IN RECEIPT OF RELIEF.

On January 1st and July 1st in each Year.

	Year.	Men.	Women.	Children.	Total.	Cost.	Per Head.		
						£	£	*s.*	*d.*
Outdoor Relief, including Medical Relief only ...	1899	121	647	152	920	5,549	6	0	7
	1903	63	357	113	533	3,382	6	6	11
Indoor Relief ...	1899	964	794	618	2,376	33,300	14	0	3
	1903	912	752	609	2,273	33,590	14	15	7

I would specially point out that whereas there is a *decrease* of 387 persons and £2,167 in Outdoor relief, each person in receipt of such relief has 6s. 4d. *more;* and also that persons have not been forced into the House, for Indoor relief has decreased by 103. The increased cost of Indoor relief is principally due to the opening of our New Infirmary in April, 1900.

It will not prevent the iron entering the soul of the really destitute, the broken-hearted widow, the poor fellow with his wife in a lunatic asylum, the man in the grip of the living death of consumption with a wife and young children dependent upon him, the poor old folk left desolate in their closing years while the grey shadows of poverty, pain, and death gather ever deeper and closer around

them; but it will enable you, watching as you have done the sad story unroll before your eyes, to help wisely, liberally, and without reiterated asking of painful questions.

It has been said men cannot be made sober by Act of Parliament. It is certain that they cannot be made truthful by History Sheet, but it makes it much more difficult to be a successful liar; and after all, most people are hopelessly inaccurate rather than deliberate liars, except in the matter of "sons," of whom, in the Poor Law, there is a most phenomenal absence!

It affords much valuable information to the Settlement Clerk, the General Relieving Officer, and Warrant Officer. It is of inestimable value in the administration of outdoor relief, and in questions of repayment by liable relatives, often enabling the Guardians to make arrangements whereby people are kept off the rates altogether.

It will not make either Guardians or Relieving Officers perfect, but it will help them very much on that road. The average mortal is not built on heroic lines, either good or bad, and what we most of us desire is just to put our little best into our work in our own little corner of the world, and the History Sheet helps us largely to do this, by in itself providing a technical education and by aiding that concentration of thought in dealing with

an intricate individual case which, without this help is so difficult amidst the hundreds that come before us in one day, enabling us quickly to grasp the details which must guide us in applying principles.

These poor folk with whom we have to deal are, as a rule, either through their misfortune or their fault, the mere victims of circumstance, drifting rudderless through life, without ambition, without love, without hope either for this world or the next. Let us see to it that we bring to bear on this disordered existence those principles of love and duty, which are as the breath of life, without which any system is but as the chiselled marble, beautiful indeed, but cold, unfruitful, dead.

"CASE PAPERS" OR "HISTORY SHEETS."

(A.) *PARISH OF BETHNAL GREEN.*

Name of Applicant — Creed

Name of Husband or Wife — Creed

Residence on First Application — How long there

History Sheet No. — Relief District No.

Date of Application.	Nature and Cause of Application, and how dealt with by the Officers concerned.	Order of Guardians.

	Age.	M. S. W.	Date of Birth.	Where Born. (Address.)	Occupation and Earnings of each Person on first Application. For subsequent Applications, see Sheet C.
1. (*a*) Names of Applicant and Wife ... (*b*) Names of Children under 16... ... (*c*) Names of Children over 16					See Sheets D & E.

2. (*a*) Weekly Rent and Arrears (*b*) Other Debts ... ... (*c*) Club or Benefit Society... (*d*) Trade Society ... ... (*e*) Nature and source of other assistance (if any) ...	

3. INSURANCE. (*a*) Amount due at Death ... (*b*) Amount of Premium ... (*c*) Name of Society... ... (*d*) Person to whom nominated ... ... (*e*) Person holding the Policy	

4.	
(*a*) Name of nearest Relative or Friend	
(*b*) Relationship of ditto ...	
(*c*) Address of ditto	

5.	
(*a*) Date of late Husband or Wife's Death	
(*b*) Place of his or her Death	
(*c*) When and where last chargeable	
(*d*) Period of Residence in the Parish without Relief or interruption	

6. Where Married.	Date of Marriage.	Maiden Name of Wife.	If Certificate inspected by Relieving Officer.

RELIEVING OFFICER'S OBSERVATIONS.

DATE.	

REPORT OF GENERAL RELIEVING OFFICER

(WHERE APPLICABLE TO CASE).

A REPORT on the Circumstances of
a Relative liable to Maintain his
who is at present chargeable to the Parish of Bethnal Green, in the

---

Name and Age of the liable Relative
His Place of Residence
What is his Occupation and where employed ?
What are his Earnings ?
What other Sources of Income ?
Has he a Wife, has she Employment, and what does she earn ?
Names, Ages, Addresses, and Earnings of Children ?
What Rent does he Pay, and Arrears (if any) ?
Is he in Debt ?
Is he a Member of a Club, or Friendly Society ?
Does he Maintain, or Contribute to the Maintenance of, any other Relative ?
Other Particulars (if any)
Source of Information

Dated

Relieving Officer.

Name and Address of Relative or Person contributing

Relationship to Person in receipt of Relief

Amount ordered by Board to be contributed s. d.
per week.

Date up to which Arrears are Calculated.	Amount of Arrears.	Observations of Collector.

N.B.—The Reports on this sheet to be entered by the Collector alternately in Red and Black Ink.

A separate Sheet must be used by him for each Person ordered to contribute.

No.

SETTLEMENT SHEET.

History Sheet No.

DISCUSSION.

The delegates evidently enjoyed the reading of the paper very greatly, and testified to the fact by frequent and hearty applause.

Mr. H. G. WILLINK inquired whether the Application and Report-book had still to be kept if the case-paper system was in operation.

Miss JAMES said this was so now, but the Paddington and Bethnal Green Boards were urging the Local Government Board to allow the use of that book to be discontinued where the case-paper system was in vogue.

Miss BRODIE-HALL (Eastbourne) said that she represented the Eastbourne Union, where the case-paper system had been in operation for two years. Three years ago she came to the conclusion that the relieving officers of that Union were not doing their work efficiently, for she felt that the case-paper system would ensure the proper performance of the duties of the office, and that it would place the Board in possession of systematic information which she had herself kept for many years in regard to the children who had come under the care of the Guardians. She considered that it was extremely undesirable that that information should be in the hands of one person who might be absent from the meetings of the Board, or who might cease to sit as a Guardian. She therefore brought to the notice of the Board the desirability of adopting the case-paper system. The Board's first objection was that it was a very inquisitorial system, and that it would give the relieving officers a great deal of extra work. She said, if necessary, pay them more, but insist on efficient service. (Hear, hear.) After some trouble the system was introduced, and had been in operation about two years. There was a certain number of Guardians who had very warm hearts and no heads, and they sat on the Board for the purpose

chiefly of indulging in the charming sensation of giving away other people's money. (Cheers and laughter.) They meant well, but they did an enormous amount of harm. (Hear, hear.) The case-papers benefited the relieving officers by keeping them up to their work, and by preserving a permanent and handy record of each case, and they helped to ensure that equitable treatment of the poor, without which the really deserving were sure to be overlooked. The result of the system had already been to effect desirable changes in the *personnel* of the relief staff, and had secured thorough investigation of each case applying for relief; and, moreover, the valuable information collected was now always available in a compact form for future reference and guidance. She was indebted to Mr. Aveling (Clerk of the Paddington Board) originally for many of the *Forms*. The case-papers used at Eastbourne were:—A. Application for Relief; B. Order to admit to Workhouse; C. Report on Circumstances of Persons Relieved; D. Report on Circumstances of Relatives Liable to Maintain; E. Board's Recommendation (Indoor); F. Board's Recommendation (Outdoor); G. Relieving Officer's Report on Removal of Patient to Asylum; H. Special Report by Relieving Officer; and the Supplemental forms used were:—C. Report (twice in each quarter) on Paupers Relieved; D. Earnings Note (to be filled in by persons for whom the applicant had been working). There was also a special case-paper for children. In forms E and F there was a column for the initials of the Vice-Chairman, to be appended to every order of the Board in regard to the case. Form G, the relieving officer's report, was very useful in making inquiries into the circumstances of persons of whose antecedents little or nothing was known. Last, and perhaps most important, was the case-paper for children. Their greatest hope lay in the children who could be transformed into good citizens if the

Guardians would but take a little trouble. (Hear, hear.)

The case-paper for the children is appended *in extenso :*

No.

Name		Age
Date of Birth	Where Born	
Date of Chargeability	190 . Parish	
Religious Creed	Legitimate ?	
Orphan, or Deserted, or Parents Convicted for Cruelty		
If Baptized, Date and Place		
If under Poor Law Act, 1899, Date of Resolution		
Date when Guardians' Control will cease		
Parents' Names		
If living, Place of Abode		
If either or both Deceased, Date and Place		
Parents' Occupation		
Names and Addresses and Occupations of Relatives (If any)		
Names and Addresses of Brothers and Sisters (if any)		
Sent to Training Home at		Date
Boarded-Out under	Committee	Date
Emigrated through		Date
Sent to Service to		Date

One of the most useful columns was that relating to the brothers and sisters, in many cases the children had older brothers and sisters who were able and willing and glad to befriend them. The case-paper for children was so valuable that even if Guardians did not adopt the whole of the system they could hardly refuse to adopt that for the children. (Hear, hear.) The case-papers were kept for reference in the Board-room. She would be glad to give information to any Guardian in the Conference District as to the working of the system. (Hear, hear.)

Replying to Mr. Vallance, Miss Brodie-Hall added that the case-papers were always in the Board-room during the meetings, and that when the relieving officer required to make entries in them, the papers were taken out by the clerk for that purpose.

The PRESIDENT said he thought that Miss Brodie-Hall had made a successful attempt to show that the London case-paper system could be equally well applied to country Unions.

Mr. H. A. POWELL (Guildford) said that it seemed to him that the Charity Organisation Society was the pioneer of the case-paper system, and thought problems which faced the Society and the Guardians were not absolutely identical; he believed that the case-paper system would be a valuable help to the Guardians, and he would like to see it in extended use throughout the country. He wished that there could be some interchange of courtesies between London and country Boards so that there might be opportunities of studying the administration on the spot. (Hear, hear.) He feared that, at present, there was often little or no investigation of cases, the Chairman said "half-a-crown a week?" and "half-a-crown a week" had it. (Laughter.)

Mrs. STUART (Elham) said that she was one of the Folkestone representatives on that Board, the first (she was sorry to say) lady Guardian on the Board. She would do her best to get the case-paper system introduced on her return. (Hear, hear.) It would minimise the dangers of changes in the *personnel* of the Board and its officials by preserving in a permanent sense and accessible form all that was known about each case. Perhaps it would be a good thing to add to the case-paper items a little information as to the drinking habits of the applicants, whether moderate or immoderate, and so forth. "Order," said John Milton, "is heaven's first law." Disorders seemed to reign on most Boards of Guardians. She for her part would do her best to bring that little bit of heaven down below. (Cheers.)

Rev. J. SHAW (Epsom) said he wished to express his appreciation of the able and admirable paper read by Miss James. However, the case-papers would not open the eyes of the blind nor cast out

devils, but they did something—they "choked off" people. (Laughter.) That is the description given of the final outcome of the system. On whom were they choked? (Cheers and laughter.) What other body did the unhappy wretches who were the victims of the case-paper system apply to for help? (Cheers.) If that was the latest development of Poor Law work it was very unsatisfactory indeed. (Cheers.) Mere choking off was no good. It brought neither relief to the ratepayers nor satisfaction to the high public conscience of which their Chairman had spoken so eloquently on the previous day. Applicants were choked off the case-paper Unions, but where did they go to? (Hear, hear.) Perhaps they eventually found a haven in the shelter of the Salvation Army and similar places. The solution of the problem lay not in a system of "choking-off," but of infusing a new spirit into the administration, and healing the wounded and weary-hearted who were driven to seek relief. The trend of things to-day was to sweep away bodies which did not serve the purpose for which they were created, in accordance with the demands of the public conscience.

Mr. EICHHOFF (Chairman, Bethnal Green) said that the members of that Board did their work with enthusiasm. Did the last speaker think there were no applicants who should be "choked off"? (Cheers and laughter.) He had found that some applicants for relief had money in the bank—one as much as £5 2s. 2d.—(a laugh)—another had two sons, one of whom employed seven men. They should remember, too, the position of the ratepayers from whose funds they were being choked off. (Hear, hear.) Bethnal Green was not one of the richest parishes in London. The case-paper system tended to an economical and equitable administration of relief, and placed on record in a convenient form all the known facts about each case dealt with by the Board, and it had resulted in a

saving of at least £10,000 in two and a half years in Bethnal Green. (Cheers.) With regard to the drink question, he did not think it would be politic to introduce it on the case-paper. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. PALMER GRENVILLE said that the paper must have brought conviction to most of them at the first hearing. It seemed to him that every Board ought to adopt it. He suggested that the information in the case-paper should be supplied to the Guardians of the district in which persons who had made application resided. It would help to prevent the "choking-off" process in deserving cases. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. E. W. EMPSON, J.P. (Chairman, Paddington) said he remembered reading a paper on the subject some ten years ago. His Board had found the system of the utmost utility. It brought every case clearly before them *ab initio*, and any one could see at a glance how the case stood. Mr. Willink asked whether the "Application and Report book" had still to be kept when the case-papers were in use. That question was before the Local Government Board at the present time, and he believed that the discontinuance of the use of the book would be granted, although his Board would still continue to keep it for the entry of the names only, for facility of reference. Though at first the system gave more work to the relieving officers, it very soon made their work much easier, and gave them more satisfaction, as it preserved the record of their work in a permanent form always available for reference; and the knowledge that the case-paper system was in use had been found to reduce the applications for relief. The case-paper system had effected a great saving in his own Union. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. C. H. CLAPP (Horsham) said it seemed to him that the system merely increased the machinery of the Poor Law without any proportionate advantage. Surely the existing machinery was adequate to secure all that the papers advocated,

if the relieving officers and the Guardians did their duty, and made proper inquiries into each case. (Hear, hear.)

Miss JAMES, replying, said that the saving effected by the case-paper system in Bethnal Green was even larger than her chairman had stated, some £15,000 in three years. (Hear, hear.) She did not approve of the idea of putting questions on the case-paper as to the drinking habits of the applicants. As to "choking-off," she hoped that no Guardian would hesitate to reject some such application as she had quoted in her paper. Amid laughter and signs of general approval she mentioned other cases which had been "choked off" by the system, and rightly so. The proposal to give the Guardians a copy of the case-paper of the applicants in their own districts was opposed to sound administration. It was so hard to refuse relief and then have to go and ask for a vote. (Cheers and laughter.) The case-paper system was valuable not only to the Guardians, but to those who, like the officials of the Society for the After-care of the Insane, had to investigate the circumstances of those who were chargeable to the poor-rate. (Hear, hear.)

THE CASE-PAPER OR HISTORY-SHEET SYSTEM

By Miss W. L. BRODIE-HALL, F.R.Met.Soc.

THE CASE-PAPER OR HISTORY-SHEET SYSTEM

By Miss W. L. BRODIE-HALL, F.R.Met.Soc.,
Guardian, Eastbourne Union.

"CAN any one doubt that the undue prevalence of pauperism in certain parts of the country is unnecessary? It is the result of bad administration. If it were possible that there should be a uniform expert administration of the Poor Law throughout the whole country, it is beyond question that pauperism would gradually diminish towards a complete extinction, and that everybody in the country would be the better in consequence.

"The Poor Law, rightly used, is quite sufficient for the purpose. Those who cannot provide for themselves may obtain every necessary of life through its merciful provisions. But, unfortunately, those who will not provide for themselves are now permitted to use the advantages which were intended only for the necessarily destitute, and still more unfortunately actual inducements are held out to

them to do so. The possibilities of the Poor Law are turned to a wrong purpose, and it is made to encourage vice and wastefulness where it should further clean-living and thrift.

"The law is blamed for the fault of the Executive. Why have we over 900,000 paupers to-day (costing £14,300,000)? Because the grant of relief has been abused, and the inducements to thrift have been thereby removed.

"If pauperism is ever to be reduced within its true limits, it will only be done by the constant observation of every fluctuation of the circumstances of every case to which relief has been granted."

I think no Guardian who really appreciates the responsibility of his work and who has not sought election from any personal or secondary motive, will hesitate to subscribe to the opinions here quoted from the report of one of the most experienced Inspectors of the Local Government Board—Mr. Baldwyn Fleming.[1]

Careful administration, made possible by minute inquiry and constant observation of each relief case, can, it appears to me, only be really efficiently carried out by the use of some such system as I am asked to explain to you to-day. I desire at the outset to

[1] Thirty-second Annual Report of Local Government Board, p. 75.

establish a connection between the efficiency of administration aimed at by Mr. Fleming and the use of "Case-papers," or as they are sometimes called "History Sheets," otherwise you will regard this paper as a counsel of perfection not to be entertained by practical and busy men who already think themselves overweighted by regulations and cramped in action by "red tape."

We shall mostly be agreed that relief, when given, should be adequate—given on a principle which ensures justice and fairness not only to the recipient but also to his more self-reliant neighbour—given only after careful and minute investigation as to circumstances, in order not only to prevent imposture but also to ensure that the relief offered is of such kind as to bring real amelioration, and not a sapping of the self-dependence of which a germ may yet be left in the applicant.

There can be no doubt that out-relief lavishly given without due inquiry is the primary cause of the increase of pauperism throughout England and Wales, which for several years past has been noted by the Inspectors of the Local Government Board. Mr. Davy, C.B. (the Assistant Secretary of the Local Government Board) says, "It is increasingly evident that the present system of investigation and relief is in urgent

need of reform"; and the reports of all the Inspectors equally show the pressing need for a more stringent system of inquiry and of relief, accompanied (in many Unions) by an increase in number, and certainly in efficiency, of the relieving officers. A more careful administration has been repeatedly proved to bring about a reduction of pauperism without any increase of hardship to the poor; in fact, although with more minute inquiry the number of paupers has decreased, the grant per head has increased, showing that more adequate relief has been given to deserving cases, while the undeserving have rightly been weeded out. It must be remembered that Guardians are not almoners of a charitable fund, and have no right to deal with the rates as such; but are administrators of public money, compulsorily levied from, in many cases, unwilling ratepayers, and to a large extent from a class only just removed in poverty from those who ask relief. It has been truly said that half the bad Poor Law administration arises from Guardians confusing destitution and poverty. It is their duty, as repeatedly laid down by the Local Government Board, to relieve destitution; it is for charity to deal with poverty, and so to prevent the poor from becoming paupers.

It is obvious that if relief is to be given consistently and appropriately to the needs

of each applicant, the fullest information must be available as to his antecedents, present circumstances, and relations liable to maintain; and further that any change in those circumstances should be at once made known to the Guardians. I think I may justly say that, without the use of some system of Case-papers, the information obtained by relieving officers is seldom complete, hardly ever historical, and entirely wanting in continuity, a very important point both to Guardians and paupers.

Three years ago I persuaded my Board to adopt the use of Case-papers chiefly because I was convinced that the relieving officers were not working efficiently, and that circumstances well known to myself and others regarding applicants for relief were not reported to the Board; hence relief was often given to most undesirable cases.

The adoption of the system has resulted in a marvellous change in method and in administration. The following is a list of the Forms used by the Eastbourne Union:

A. Application for Relief.
B. Order to admit to Workhouse.
C. Report on Circumstances of Persons Relieved.
D. Report on Circumstances of Relatives liable to Maintain.

E. Board's Recommendation (Indoor).
F. Board's Recommendation (Outdoor).
G. Relieving Officer's Report on Removal of Lunatics to Asylum.
H. Special Report of Relieving Officer.
J. Children's Case-Paper.

SUPPLEMENTAL FORMS USED.

C.1. Report (bi-quarterly) on Paupers Relieved.
D.1. Earnings Note.

Copies of these *Forms* are printed as an appendix to this paper.

I notice in some Unions the *Application Form* (*A*) is filled in by the relieving officer, not by the applicant. I think our method of requiring the applicant to fill in and sign is preferable. We hear his own story, and the insistence on his signature has a good moral effect; many people hesitate to commit themselves *in writing* to untrue statements. The relieving officer then follows up with *Form C*. or *H*., entering therein the result of his own independent inquiries, which he is thus able to compare with the applicant's statement. *Forms E*. and *F*. are almost identical (indoor and outdoor relief) and give a summary of information and the decision of

the Board. On every fresh application these forms are placed before the Chairman in order that the Board's decision may be entered and initialled by him. *Form D.*1 is found most useful—the fact that it is known to be in use is a strong deterrent to incorrect statements as to earnings.

We must now consider

The Underlying Principle

of the Case-paper, and the benefits arising from its use. The former has been so admirably defined by Miss James, a Guardian of Bethnal Green [1] that I make no apology for quoting it:

"The history sheet emphasises the fundamental principle of all corporate action by placing the family in its proper position, as the indivisible unit in civil life. As the individual is the unit out of which the family is built, so the family is the unit out of which the State is built. As the dismemberment of the body means the dissolution of the individual, so the dismemberpent of the family means the ultimate death of the State. This is a principle which must ever rule our actions both in private and public life. An undying truth underlies that old Mosaic law 'Honour thy father and thy mother that thy days may

[1] Pp. 37–8.

be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee'; and whenever a man considers himself above law, and ceases to have his actions governed by those principles by which, as a rational being, he is intended to order his life, he instantly finds himself in a worse position than what we call the 'lower animals,' who, being without reason, are ever guided in their actions by an unerring instinct."

We next come to

The Benefits of the System.

(1.) It ensures that full information as to each case shall be in possession of the Guardians before relief is given or refused. This information being adequate, the relief will also be adequate, *i.e.*, given with such perfect knowledge of the applicant's circumstances as will secure his being relieved in a manner calculated to help him to the utmost, and not to harm him. "Two minutes spent in looking through his history sheet will fully acquaint you with all the main facts of a man's life. You will have close personal knowledge of every person that has ever been under your care, of their circumstances, their children, their relatives, their illnesses, what is the probable cause of their immersion in the slough of pauperism, what is the likelihood of their ever getting out of it."

In a large number of country Unions applicants are not required to attend before the Guardians in person, hence the only information available must come through the relieving officer. This fact alone should prove the advantages to be gained by the use of Case-papers.

(2.) The Case-paper preserves in writing, not in the chance memory of some one Guardian or officer, a *continuous* record of every case. Many a remark about an applicant which may easily be made by a fluent speaker will not appear in a report which he is required *to write*, for it will for ever be recorded against him; hence greater justice is secured. Very specially does this apply to country Unions where the Board are so likely to be guided by the report of the Guardian of the parish in which the applicant resides.

Again, as regards admission to the House —the history of John Brown or Mary Jones is briefly noted in the Application and Report book, the relieving officers turn over a fresh page, and Brown and Jones are forgotten. But once their case is brought before the Guardians in a Case-paper it is not dropped until everything that can be done or tried has been done, and Brown and Jones are not left without hope to settle down for life in the House.

And further, as regards cases to whom

relief has rightly been refused. In country Unions such cases after refusal not infrequently move from one district to another; in a year or two they make fresh application, carefully suppressing every circumstance that would readily lead to identification as a previously rejected case; *e.g.*, James Thomas Smith, refused, not destitute, able-bodied, owns two freehold cottages in another Union, £20 in savings bank—appears after two years as Tom Smith, from a village twelve miles distant from his previous residence. The careful record of his first application, circumstances, and rejection has been preserved in a Case-paper, and so the identity of Tom Smith with James Thomas Smith is recognised and proper justice dealt to him.

The second benefit of the system necessarily leads to the third.

(3.) It ensures that continuity of principle in administration which is so important to the poor; they apprehend very quickly the principles on which a Board of Guardians act, if these are applied impartially, if they see that their neighbours similarly situated are similarly treated, if relief is given or refused on fixed rules and not by temporary considerations.

I am convinced from long experience that the suspicion of partiality in granting relief is a far greater cause of irritation to the poor

than its mere refusal, and a tendency to such partiality is strongly guarded against by the existence of carefully kept Case-papers.

(4.) Another benefit of the system is that it minimises the disadvantages arising from constant change in the *personnel* of the Board whether by election or retirement. "The new Guardian has the judgment of his predecessor and the data on which he based that judgment before him, instead of all past efforts to deal with the case being buried in oblivion."

(5.) It encourages and keeps relieving officers up to a better standard of work, especially when (as is often the case in country districts) they are inclined to be slack in visiting, or tempted to show favouritism; it is also an encouragement to them to persist in well-doing spite of temporary lapses of interest on the part of the Board, or the desire of the "kind-hearted" Guardians to give prodigal out-relief when the "hard-headed" Guardians are absent. It undoubtedly assists in the education of that class of Guardian, all heart and no head, whose one standard of administration appears to be, "Make no inquisitorial inquiries—give whatever is asked."

(6.) And lastly, but certainly not least in importance, is the immense help afforded by the Case-paper for children—*Form J.* Here

at least there is not only hope, but certainty, that appropriate treatment, made possible by full information, will be rewarded in the future by the development of self-supporting, self-reliant citizens. In *country* Unions, at any rate, the greater proportion of children who come under the care of the Guardians are "permanent cases," not "ins and outs"—orphans, deserted, children of non-able-bodied parents and such-like—for whose entire bringing-up, and, later on, choice of occupation and start in life, the Guardians are alone responsible. Hence it is all-important that a complete record should exist of a child's parentage, physical and moral heredity, mental condition, standard of education, and relatives—not only liable to maintain, but liable to interfere when the child reaches that wage-earning age which starts into sudden life the affection and solicitous care which for years have lain curiously dormant. With such a record at hand Guardians are enabled to form a sound opinion as to the most suitable method of education and employment for each case. It is a grave mistake to suppose that in dealing with Poor Law children all are equally adaptable to any one method. The various systems of Cottage Homes, Boarding-out, Training Ships, and Training Schools for elder children, Emigration, &c., &c., can all be brought into use with advantage once the characteristics of each child are known.

In recommending the Case-paper system to my Board I was strongly influenced by the fact that as regards our children it would place in possession of the Guardians the systematic information which I had for some twenty years obtained and recorded for my private use—information which in dealing with the children on their start in life, or in later difficulties either with themselves or their relatives, had proved of untold value to me. Such information should, for obvious reasons, not rest in the hands of any one Guardian, but should be recorded and preserved in such a manner as to be available for reference at any moment by any Guardian or officer.

I should like to give you one illustration of the disadvantage—in this case danger—of having no Children's History Sheet available for reference. Among many boys whom we emigrated in 1888 was one particularly intelligent, well-behaved boy of fourteen. He was placed with a farmer in Manitoba, whence both from his master and himself I received frequent reports of his good conduct and happiness. Some four years after his emigration our Clerk received an urgent appeal from a Canadian solicitor to forward him any information possible as to the antecedents of P. W., as he had been convicted of the manslaughter of his master's sister-in-law, and sentenced to penal servitude for life; but

owing to his youth, extenuating circumstances, and the excellent character given by his master, the judge had deferred the sentence till inquiry could be made as to any possible taint of insanity in his family. No History Sheet existed in those days, and no Guardian remembered the boy. I alone chanced to have known his family well, and when he left us made a note of his antecedents. But I was at the other end of Europe, and on receiving our Clerk's request for help could do no more than wire to Canada that I possessed information which should be sent on my return to England. P. W.'s grandmother and aunt had died in a Lunatic Asylum, and other relatives had shown curious periodical symptoms of irresponsibility. I communicated these and other facts to the Canadian judge, and was able through friends in Canada to have his case carefully watched. The result was that the first sentence was commuted to one of fifteen years' confinement in Manitoba Penitentiary, with a promise of further reduction of five years if the boy gained a first-class certificate of good conduct. This he did, and on his discharge I was able to place him in an excellent situation with a builder whom I knew in Saskatchewan ; he has lately set up for himself as a mechanician and smith, and is doing well. What would have been that boy's position now, if a private

Case-paper, so to speak, had not been kept, or if I had meantime ceased to be a Guardian?

I will now give a few typical illustrations of the History Sheet, enabling you to judge at a glance the kind of information afforded and its value. The first two cases shall be from Bethnal Green, as given by Miss James.

A. *Complete History Sheet.*

(1.) No. 6377. Frederick S——, forty-seven; wife, thirty-seven; three children; an undertaker's coachman; no club, but insured threepence a week; applies for out-relief.

4/4/02. For relief, husband sick, and unable to work. Relief in kind given, husband to be summoned when well.

14/4/02. Husband was admitted to Victoria Park Chest Hospital.

15/4/02. Another child born, and relief in kind continued, until

23/5/02. Eliza and Arthur admitted to the schools. Arthur ill, and admitted to infirmary.

7/6/02. Husband admitted to the infirmary.

2/8/02. A doctor's order for woman and infant.

14/8/02. Burial order for infant.

18/12/02. The woman admitted to infirmary suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis.

17/2/03. Husband died in the infirmary of pulmonary tuberculosis.

17/9/03. Wife died in the infirmary of pulmonary tuberculosis.

This case is a good example of the value of a History Sheet from a medical point of view; the fact that both parents died of consumption will probably have some bearing on the future of the two children who are being brought up in the schools.

(2.) No. 3915. James W——, forty-two, labourer; wife, thirty-five, and five children. Between November 1892 and December 1900 this family had been in and out forty-four times. "They did not always come in *en famille*, and their eldest boy, aged ten, had established a record of his own, having been in and out fifty-five times in six years! John, aged seven, and Edward, aged four months, had both been born in the House." Their first entry in the newly adopted History Sheet is July 10, 1900, "Admitted to House"; and "from that day to this that entry is repeated twenty-two times with the mathematical variations of which the number seven is capable—'Man, wife, and five children,' 'Wife and three children,' 'Man,' &c., &c. Once the Guardians had the man arrested with a view to making him maintain himself and his family. The children always came in fat, clean, and well-cared-for, having a very good

time when out hopping, pea-picking, &c. The whole family is now, under their sixty-seventh admission order, comfortably settled in the House."

B. *Cases in which the History-sheet System has revealed new facts justifying discontinuance of Relief.*

The next illustrations shall be from my own Union, showing how the more stringent information now insisted on by the use of Case-papers has brought to light facts which if known would have caused relief to be refused on the first application.

(1.) John B——, age thirty-four, seaman; wife, thirty-nine; six children; disabled from loss of a thumb and paralysis of one arm; applied for outdoor relief, November 1901; relief granted and continued (varying from 9s. 3d. to 13s. 3d. weekly) till December 1903, when House order was given and refused. This family has now been taken off the list entirely through knowledge gained by the History Sheet, followed up by kindly pressure from the relieving officer, who has been instrumental in helping the man to self-support. He is now earning his own living, and none of his family are in receipt of relief.

(2) Hannah H——, fifty, widow, unable to

work, applied for outdoor relief in 1900; 3s. weekly granted. Presently a new relieving officer insisted on her filling up and signing *Form A*. The information now given *by herself* is as follows: One daughter and three sons, all single, at home, earning between them 42s. a week; two lodgers paying 4s.; rent 10s. 6d. a week; a married son doing good business as a fish-hawker. Relief was discontinued as soon as those facts were known.

(3.) Amelia H——, sixty-three, married, charwoman, no fixed abode, destitute; applied on these grounds for House order. A regular in-and-out case. Inquiries recently made on *Form D* brought to light a husband and two sons, earning 18s. a week, the woman herself in receipt of 2s. a week under her father's will. Order made for contribution.

(4.) James B——, sixty-four, carrier; wife, sixty-four; unable to earn living; one son away from home; applied December 1903 on those grounds for out-relief. The subsequent filling up of *Forms C* and *D* revealed these facts: The man was able-bodied, though occasionally rheumatic; owned a pony and small van which he used for hawking fish; paid 6s. 6d. rent per week; son a publican whose *clear* weekly income was £4 10s., and who had so far refused to help his father on account of his drunken habits.

C. *Cases of Relatives liable to maintain.*

(1.) P. H——, eighty-six, widow. Had received outdoor relief for many years up to June 1903. Careful inquiry then showed she had two sons in very comfortable circumstances in another county. Called on to contribute, they wrote that if the Guardians thought it their duty to the ratepayers to stop the allowance, their mother could apply to them direct. The relief was at once stopped.

(2.) H. H——. This woman had been in receipt of outdoor relief for many years when it was found (June 1903) she was living with a son who was a well-to-do tradesman. Called on to fill up *Form D*, he declined to give the necessary information, and the relief was therefore stopped.

D. *Case illustrating need of Children's History Sheets.*

I should like now to mention a case showing what occurred before we had History Sheets.

(1.) Ellen and Alice P——, alias S——. These children were admitted to the Workhouse, May 1893, deserted by their mother, nothing known of father. Ellen was sent to a Training Home in 1895, and in 1900 to service. Alice was boarded out, and in 1902 sent to a Laundry Training Home, where she

still is. In 1903, ten years after being chargeable, relatives of the children were found living in Eastbourne, and would have remained undiscovered had not application been made by them to the Guardians to have Ellen to help in the aunt's laundry. Further inquiries brought to light that the father of the children, S——, was also still living in Eastbourne, and had brought up a brother of these two girls. He was immediately called upon to contribute toward the support of the child Alice, now chargeable, which he does. Had the History-sheet System been in use in 1893, the non-discovery of the father for ten years would not have been possible.

I have already said that one of the good results secured by the Case-paper System is the reduction of expenditure. This may be considered by some a matter of secondary importance, and yet from the view of national economics, can it be wisely disregarded? It has been truly said that to consider one class apart from another, and to benefit one portion of the community at the expense of others, must be disastrous to the commonwealth.[1] And surely when the lesser expenditure is proved to involve no hardship to the deserving poor, any system achieving such results should be warmly supported by all Guardians.

[1] "The English Poor Laws," by Miss S. Lonsdale. P. S. King & Son, Westminster. Post free, 1s. 2d.

The saving effected by the system of "history sheets" in Bethnal Green is stated to be some £15,000 in three years; and the following figures from the returns of that parish for 1899 (before the history sheets were in use) and 1903, show that with a decrease of 387 persons relieved, and £2,167 less expended in outdoor relief, each person relieved has 6s. 11d. more, and persons forced into the House have decreased by 103.

MEAN NUMBERS IN RECEIPT OF RELIEF

On January 1st and July 1st in each Year.

	Year.	Men.	Women.	Children.	Total.	Cost.	Per Head.
						£	£ s. d.
Outdoor Relief, including Medical Relief only ...	1899	121	647	152	920	5,549	6 0 7
	1903	63	357	113	533	3,382	6 6 11
Indoor Relief ...	1899	964	794	618	2,376	33,300	14 0 3
	1903	912	752	609	2,273	33,590	14 15 7

The Union of Exeter provides another instance of the result of adopting a system of minute inquiry and careful administration (such as Case-papers would ensure, and is quoted by Mr. Preston-Thomas in his return.[1] In 1898 (January 1st) the cost of outdoor relief was £5,998 a year, while that for 1903 (January 1st) was £3,738, the number of outdoor paupers during the same time having dropped from 1,127 to 572, and the

[1] Thirty-second Annual Report of Local Government Board, p. 96.

proportion of paupers of all classes having fallen from 42 to 28 per 1,000. And yet this reduction of cost, amounting to £2,260 a year, has been effected without hardship to the poor, nor has there been any material change in the number or circumstances of the population, the improvement being due only to improved administration.

In conclusion, let no Guardian suppose that in urging the adoption of Case-papers I am putting forward a method which in any sense whatever involves "crushing the poor." On the contrary, it is on behalf of the deserving poor—to ensure their more just and more adequate relief, more truly helpful because more discriminating—that I ask you to adopt the system in your own Unions. What the poor and the State need—for eventually their well-being coincides—is a wise, earnest, painstaking administration of a law which is called on to regulate the application of public funds to cases of destitution—funds which have none of the "blessing to him who gives and to him who receives" attached to the generous or spontaneous gift of charity, which is the outward expression of love and sympathy to our poorer brethren given at some *personal* cost to ourselves. Surely we Guardians have a responsibility beyond the mere granting relief—a responsibility, never by any hasty or ill-judged decision to weaken the character or

to undermine the resourcefulness of men and women who with ourselves are citizens of a great Empire—never to weaken the self-reliance and sturdy independence of those who often, only temporarily in distress, may by wise dealing and careful control on our part be again set on their feet and become a source of strength instead of weakness to the community.

EASTBOURNE UNION.

FORM A.

EASTBOURNE UNION.

FORM TO BE FILLED UP BY PERSONS APPLYING FOR RELIEF.

Persons obtaining relief by means of false representations are liable to imprisonment with hard labour.

Name and Age of Applicant
Place of Residence
Usual Occupation
Married or Single
Wife's Name and Age
Names of Children at home and their Ages
Names and Addresses of Sons away from home and their Occupations
In or out of Employment
Total Weekly Earnings of Applicant
Total Weekly Earnings of rest of Family
Description of Relief Applied for
Reason given for Application
Rent of House per Week
If any Lodgers, and what they pay
Time Applicant has lived in Eastbourne Union
If a member of any Provident Institution or Benefit Society, and the amount receivable in case of sickness
Signature of Applicant
Signature and Address of Employer, if at work; or of last Employer, if out of work
Date of Application

N.B.—The Applicant must in every case, where possible, obtain the signature of his Employer to this paper, and return it to the Relieving Officer.

Case No.

ORDER TO ADMIT PAUPER to WORKHOUSE.

Date 190

Name

Age

FORM B.

No. Case No.

EASTBOURNE UNION.

Relieving Officer's Order to Admit to Workhouse [or Infirmary].

To the Master of Eastbourne Workhouse.

Please to Admit the undermentioned Person to the Workhouse.

Dated this day of 190 ; at h. m. M.
Name of Person (in full)
Whether Married, Widowed, or Single
Age ; Calling
If Married Woman, or Widow. { Husband's Name in full
Do. Occupation
If a Child (Legitimate) { Father's Name in full
Do. Occupation
If a Child (Illegitimate) { Mother's in full
Do. Occupation
Where heretofore residing
Religious Persuasion
Reason given for Application
[Presumed Malady]

STATEMENT AS TO RELATIVES OF ABOVE PERSON.

Names of Wife, Husband, Parents, and Children.	Ages.	If in either Workhouse or Infirmary, or in any other Institution, state in which.

Name and Address of nearest known Relative
Signed Relieving Officer.
[Countersigned Medical Officer.

FORM C.

EASTBOURNE UNION.

No. _____

A REPORT on the Circumstances of
who is at present chargeable to the Eastbourne Union, in the Workhouse [or Infirmary].

Family dependent, stating ages
When and where married
Maiden name of Wife
If Marriage Certificate seen
Rent and amount due
Earnings of Husband or Wife
Club or Benefit Society
Insurance
Nature and source of other assistance (if any)
Name of nearest Relative or Friend
Relationship of ditto
Address of ditto
Particulars of other members of the family chargeable to this or any other Parish
Has Applicant or Wife ever been passed
Names and Addresses of other Relatives liable or able to assist

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Date 190

Relieving Officer of the District.

FORM D.

EASTBOURNE UNION.

No. _____

A REPORT on the Circumstances of
a relative liable to maintain his
who is at present chargeable to the Eastbourne Union, in the Workhouse [or Infirmary Asylum], or receiving Out-Relief at a cost of per week.

Name and Age of the Relative
His place of Residence
What is his Occupation, and where employed ?
What are his verified earnings ?
What other Sources of Income ?
Has he a Wife, has she employment, and what does she earn ?
Names, Ages, Addresses, and Earnings of Children
What Rent does he pay, and arrears (if any) ?
Is he in Debt ?
Is he a Member of a Club or Friendly Society ?
Does he Maintain, or contribute to the Maintenance of, any other Relative ?
Other particulars (if any)
Source of information

Date 190

Relieving Officer of the District.

FORM E (Indoor). No.

EASTBOURNE UNION.

Name State
Date of Birth
From whence admitted
Name of Relief District from which admitted
Occupation
Cause of Applying
Disease
Date of Admission
Date of Discharge
Orders of the Board

Date.	Recommendation of Board or Committee.	Initials of Chairman.

FORM F (Outdoor). No.

EASTBOURNE UNION.

Name State

Date of Birth

Name of Relief District in which residing

Occupation

Cause of Application

Date of Application

Date of first Relief

Orders of the Board

Date.	Recommendation of Board or Committee.	Initials of Chairman.

FORM G. No.

EASTBOURNE UNION.

Relieving Officer's Report upon the Removal of a Pauper Patient to the Asylum.

Name of Patient, and Christian Name at length ?
Date of Birth, and where Born ?
Married, Single, or Widowed ?
Previous Occupation (if any) ?
If apprenticed, when, where, and to whom ?
Place of Abode ?
Names of Parents, and where Resident ?
How long resident in Union ?
Period in receipt of Relief ?
Last place of continuous Residence for three years, completed subsequently to August 15, 1876 ?
If ever rented House over £10, when and where ?
If Rates paid by Tenant ?
If deserted Wife, has settlement been acquired since desertion ?
If Widow, Date and Place of Husband's Death ?
Names of Persons liable to contribute towards Patient's support, with Addresses, Occupations, and Relationships ?
If Patient has any Property ?
Date of Reception Order ?
Names of Justices who signed the Order (Christian Names at length) ?
Asylum to which removed ?
Date of Removal ?

Dated 190

Signature of Officer.

FORM H. No.

EASTBOURNE UNION.

Date 190

To the Guardians of the Poor
of the Eastbourne Union.

Re Age Years.

I beg to state that I have made inquiry respecting the above-named, and to report that

FORM J (Children). No.

EASTBOURNE UNION.

Name Age
Date of Birth Where Born
Date of Chargeability 190 . Parish
Religious Creed Legitimate?
Orphan, or Deserted, or Parents Convicted for Cruelty
Physical Condition
Mental Condition
If Baptized, Date and Place
If under Poor Law Act, 1899, Date of Resolution
Date when Guardians' control will cease
Parents' Names
If living, Place of Abode
If either or both Deceased, Date and Place
Parents' Occupation
Names and Addresses and Occupations of Relatives (if any)
Names and Addresses of Brothers and Sisters (if any)
Sent to Training Home at Date
Boarded-Out under Committee. Date
Emigrated through Date
Sent to Service to Date

Date.	Orders of Board or Committee.	Initials of Chairman of Children's Committee, or Clerk.

FORM C (1).

EASTBOURNE UNION.

Westham District, Case No.

REPORT on Circumstances of
in receipt of Outdoor Relief.

	Relieving Officer's Report on Visit.	
	Near beginning of Quarter.	Near middle of Quarter.
1. Cause of requiring Relief ...		
2. Family Dependent, state Ages		
3. Rent		
3A. Arrears of Rent (if any) ...		
4. Earnings of Husband		
5. Earnings of Wife and Family		
6. If a Member of Club, or Benefit, or Insurance Society, Amount receivable		
7. Receipts from Church or Chapel Funds, or other Charitable Sources		
8. Particulars of other Members of the Family chargeable to this or any other Parish ...		
9. Date of First Visit during Quarter		
Date of Second Visit during Quarter		
Date of other Visits (if any) ...		
Initials of R.O....		

Clerk's Comments

FORM D (1).

EASTBOURNE UNION.

EASTBOURNE, 190

SIR,

I am directed by the Board of Guardians of this Union to request that you will have the kindness to inform them, in the interest of the Ratepayers, the average weekly earnings of the Person named below, for the last six weeks, he stating that he has been in your employment.

Yours obediently,

Relieving Officer.

To Mr.

Name.	Calling or Occupation.	Average Weekly Earnings.

Signature of Employer or Agent

SPECIMEN FORM FILLED UP.

RELIEF F. No. 11 B.

EASTBOURNE UNION.

1. *Name*—Brown, John. *State*—Married.
2. *Address*—Seaford.
3. *Occupation*—Seaman.
4. *Date of Birth*—14/8/57.
   (4*a*.) *Age at Date of First Application*—44.
5. *Name of Relief District in which residing*—Seaford.
6. *Cause of Application*—Disabled from loss of thumb and paralysis of arm.
7. *Date of Application*—9th Nov., 1901.
8. *Date of First Relief*—15th Nov., 1901.
9. *Orders of Board*—15th Nov., money 7s.; flour 4s. 9d.; 2 weeks.
   No relatives liable to contribute.
   Wife 39 years; 6 children, 15, 14, 13, 10, 7, 2.

Date.	Resolution (or Order) of Board or Committee.	Initials of Chairman.
15th Nov., 1901	7s., and 4s. 9d. flour per week for 2 weeks.	
29th " "	" " 16 "	
21st March, 1902	Meat 1s. 6d.; milk 1s. 2d. per week for 2 weeks.	
3rd April, "	7s.; flour 4s. 9d.; meat 1s. 6d.; milk 1s. 2d. per week for 26 weeks.	R. H.
26th Sept., "	Continue for 8 weeks.	
31st Oct., "	Meat and milk not given 4th week; reported. Above to be continued, but money reduced by 2s. 6d. per week.	R. H.
28th Nov., "	M. 4s. 6d.; flour 4s. 9d.; meat 1s. 6d.; milk 1s. 2d., 8 weeks.	R. H.
12th Dec., "	1s. 6d. extra milk given 9th and 10th weeks on M.O.'s certificate.	
" " "	11s. granted for conveyance to hospital.	R. H.
19th " "	1s. 6d. extra milk given on M.O.'s certificate.	R. H.
26th " "	1s. 6d. " " "	R. H.
9th Jan., 1903	1s. 6d. " " "	R. H.
23rd " "	Money 4s. 6d.; flour 4s. 9d.; meat 1s. 6d.; milk 1s. 2d., 10 weeks.	R. H.
3rd April, "	Money 4s. 6d.; flour 4s. 9d.; meat 1s. 6d.; milk 1s. 2d., 8 weeks.	R. H.
29th May, "	Money 4s. 6d.; flour 4s. 9d.; meat 1s. 6d.; milk 1s. 2d., 8 weeks.	R. H.
26th June, "	Money 4s. 6d.; flour 4s. 9d., 2 weeks only.	R. H.
10th July, "	Continue 4s. 6d. money; flour 4s. 9d., 8 weeks.	R. H.
21st Aug., "	" 6 weeks 4s. 6d.; flour 4s. 9d.	R. H.
2nd Oct., "	" 8 " 4s. 6d.; " 5s.	R. H.
27th Nov., "	" 8 " 4s. 6d.; " 3s. 4d.	R. H.
11th Dec., "	To report relief not paid 10th week, but House Order given by R.O., which he did not accept.	R. H.
" " "	Taken off list entirely through careful pressure and history gained from case-paper.	R. H.

Discussion.

The discussion was opened by Rev. D. Nickerson (Keynsham), who said that they ought all to be grateful to Miss Brodie-Hall for the trouble she had taken in bringing the matter before them, and for the admirable paper. This paper so fully discussed the whole question, and had gone so well into the matter, that it was scarcely necessary for any remarks to be made to strengthen its value. He was surprised that the system had not been thought of before. It had been adopted in all the prisons, and further it was used in the services. When a soldier entered the service all the particulars were taken about the man and carefully recorded; and then there was what was called a charge sheet, which was exactly the same as the case-paper system. It recorded, with the date and circumstance, everything the man did wrong, and wherever he went the papers went with him. All that had to be done was to take up the charge sheet and see exactly the kind of character of every man in the regiment. He had found it most useful in visiting the prisons at Gibraltar. Before going into a cell he asked for the charge sheet of the man he intended to visit, and it was then easy to deal with him properly. He hoped that all Guardians would adopt this most useful system. It was so useful that it was a self-evident truth. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. D. W. Bishop-Ackerman (Reading) said that the Reading Board of Guardians had for nearly ten years past had in operation an excellent system called the "record" system, by which the antecedents and circumstances of applicants for, and recipients of relief, were recorded, and were always at hand for reference when required. They had therefore some knowledge of the subject which had been placed before them that afternoon. He might say in passing that their adoption of such a system was not in order to disclose the delinquencies of their

relieving officer, or keep him up to the mark—they had always been fortunate in having officers in the relief department who had taken more than a professional interest in their work—but rather to insure that the history of those coming to the Board of Guardians for help, which had been ascertained at a cost of time and patience by the relief staff, should not be lost to their successors in office. On the other hand, in establishing their system his Board were not actuated by any desire to establish an inquisition into the private affairs of the poor under their care, but with a desire to see that justice was done in every case, to which end it was necessary that the whole truth should be disclosed, and not that half truth which was so hurtful to sound administration. Some ten or eleven years ago, he reminded them, a paper was read at a Conference for the South-Eastern District giving a description of the case-paper system which had then been recently introduced at Paddington. Their delegates brought home the idea with them, and the matter was thoroughly considered by his Board. At the same Conference a statement was made in the discussion by a member of a small country Board, that in his Union a record book was kept which answered the purpose of case-papers. This plan was also considered. Reading was only a small though a very progressive Union, and when it was found that the adoption of the case-paper system might necessitate an addition to the staff, they decided not to adopt the Paddington system, but they invented a record book, and from that they derived the title of the system they used at the present time. It would be easily seen that ten years had not passed by without changes in their plan. In order to meet the wishes of the Local Government Board in 1901 they revised their out-relief department, which had up to then been controlled from a central office with one relieving officer and an assistant for the clerical work. The Union was divided into two districts, and a

relieving officer was appointed for each. In this change came their difficulty with their record books. The two new officers soon found that the information in their record books was of inestimable value to them, in fact almost indispensable. But this question arose. The relieving officers were daily called upon to look up the record of some applicant, and they could only do so by going to the central office, and the time so occupied was needed for other purposes. After a careful reconsideration of the question—and it would be easily understood that a system which had worked well for years was not lightly to be cast aside—their record books were eventually superseded by the plan they had now in use. He desired to impress the fact upon them as fellow-Guardians—more particularly upon the representatives of Unions which like Reading were not able to run to the luxury of a history sheet or a case-paper clerk who devoted his whole time to that particular branch—that much might be done with very little trouble by adopting a modest system of office organisation. If they could show their relieving officers that their work would be rendered easier for themselves and better for the Guardians, he was sure they would willingly co-operate, as theirs had done, in carrying out a system by which the history of applicants could be recorded in a case-paper. In order to show that a "record" system or history sheet was not necessarily a "choking-off" system, he remarked that during the time their plan had been in operation, expenditure on outdoor relief had gone both down and up, and at the present time, with a population of 75,000, it was £70 per week, and he did not hesitate to affirm that it was better distributed and more adequate in each case than it had ever been in their Union. He went on to describe their system as it was now in use. They had a cover or file into which was put every form, letter, both outward and inward, and every fact and document that came into their possession relating to

a case. Thus the case-papers were infinite in their variety and contained everything that could be ascertained—good and bad—about every applicant. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. J. SHAW (Epsom) said he concurred with all that had been said about the merits of the paper to which they had listened that afternoon. The time and the thought given to it deserved their appreciation and thankful acknowledgment, but he claimed the right in coming to a public Conference to criticise suggestions and policy which were recommended by any man or woman. They would understand that if he challenged some of the items it was because the paper contained such broad affirmations and implications. The pauperism which existed in some towns was attributable to bad administration of the Poor Law. It was affirmed that it was bad administration, and one of the elements of bad administration was a certain class of Guardians. There were some of them with only hearts and not heads. He had never seen any superior quality of intellectual substance in those who claimed to have heads and not to have engaged themselves in the sympathies of the human heart. The implication that Boards of Guardians were wanting in vigilance and the desire to be just as well as charitable must, he said, go to the winds. He had seen a great improvement in the constitution of the *personnel* of the Boards of Guardians. It was one reason why the administration of the Poor Law had been enhanced in the estimation of the public. He could show them from the illustrations which had been given where the case-paper was in operation that they had not succeeded in obtaining all the information that they might have got, and that in failing to get the information there was a possibility of a little inconsideration. He referred to the case of the man who was brought, after receiving relief many times, into the infirmary suffering with tuberculosis, and when there he was soon told that as soon as he was

well he would be summoned. The wife was brought into the infirmary, and on medical examination was also found to be suffering with tuberculosis. He wanted to know whether threatening a man in an advanced stage of disease was not wanting in one of the first elements of justice. He contended that a head was wanted as well as a heart in doing justice. They had to administer the Poor Law and not charity. He wanted to know where the Poor Law would admit of the scheme being made to apply indiscriminately to the deserving as well as the undeserving, because he had known cases where claim for relief had come, and if they insisted upon this as a Board of Guardians he would undertake—— (Cries of "Time.")

Some disorder followed, some of the delegates desiring that the last speaker should be allowed to continue, and others desiring that the next speaker, who was Miss James, should be called upon. The Chairman called upon Miss James, at which a member of the Conference moved that Mr. Shaw should go on. This was seconded. The Chairman, however, stuck to his ruling. On a point of order Mr. Brown asked whether it was not a rule of the Conference that a resolution moved and seconded should not be put to the meeting. The Chairman persisted, and again called on the next speaker.

Miss M. E. E. James (Bethnal Green) said she had never obeyed the ruling of the chair with greater regret than she did at the present moment, as she would have preferred Mr. Shaw to finish what he had to say, but both she and the Conference were bound to obey the ruling of the chair. If the Conference would allow her a little over her five minutes —(cries of "No," and laughter)—there were two points to which she would direct their attention. The first was with regard to the history sheet system in relation to the family. In her opinion this was the vital underlying principle that made the system so valuable. In the Application Book, or in any

other system she knew of, the details of all the different members of the family were scattered here, there, and everywhere, and it was practically impossible to group them. But with the history sheet system they had them all grouped together. The loosening, she might say, the ignoring of all family ties was one of the most deplorable characteristics of the majority of those who came under the Poor Law. Parents knew nothing of their children, and had not seen or heard of them for years. Able-bodied fellows would come before the Guardians and flatly refuse to allow their poor old mother the few pence a-week that would keep her out of the Workhouse; husbands deserted their wives, and both deserted their children, who became chargeable, while they themselves formed unhallowed ties elsewhere with more children for other parishes to keep. All this was utter violation of the laws that governed family life, which was the foundation stone on which all moral civilisation was built, and the keystone that kept the fabric together. Not only pauperism, but every one of the social evils they so deplored, arose from unfaithfulness to the duty due from the individual to the family as husband, wife, parent, or child. The tale of cruelty unfolded in the police courts, the sordid folly of the divorce courts, the huge drink bill, and the terrible secret revealed in the Registrar-General's statistics—each and all of these and many other social evils were due to wrongly placing the individual at the centre of all things when it was the family and not the individual that was the indivisible social unit. They found that the working of the history sheet system not only acted on the applicant for relief, but also on Guardians and officers, for by having their minds always fixed on the family as a whole, by trying very strenuously to find all the relatives liable or likely to help, and by perpetually impressing on those who came before them their duty as members of a family, a "tone" was produced in the whole

administration which inevitably reacted on the community at large. The second subject she wished to speak about was a personal explanation respecting "choking off," but her time was up.

Dr. RHODES (Chorlton) remarked that he had been wondering while he was listening to the discussion what "choking off" had to do with the case-paper system. If they did their duty they should know the life-history of every case which came before them. They saved time by so doing. The moment a case was brought before them they had a history of the case before them; and in addition to the system saving an enormous amount of time, it increased the efficiency of the Guardians. He spoke of the system adopted in America. The object of the system was to give Guardians who administered relief a thorough knowledge of the cases which came before them, and so enable them to do their duty by the poor and the ratepayers. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. H. W. SANDFORD (Alverstoke) rose to speak because he took exception to several statements made in the paper. He had not one word to say against the case-paper system, which he thought would lead to much efficiency. There were, however, certain advantages claimed for it which should not be believed. It was said that it would practically get rid of poverty and pauperism. (Cries of "No.") He said that that was one thing which was claimed for it. ("No.") It was also claimed for the system that £15,000 in three years was saved by the Bethnal Green Guardians. Did they believe that? he asked. ("No.") He did not for a moment. It was refusing to give out-relief and throwing the people off to other places. That was where the saving came in. He was heartily in favour of the case-paper system, but he did not think that any cause was advanced by such statements as he had referred to.

Mr. S. H. COWPER-COLES (Crickhowell) said he felt grateful to Miss Brodie-Hall for the most useful

and practical paper they had yet heard. He was surprised at the last speaker questioning her figures and appealing to the gallery for an answer. He had something strong in the paper which he could take back to his Board. Speaking for the country Unions, where the relief officers were some distance from the Clerks, he would like to be told how the case-paper system was worked in the rural districts. He was perfectly satisfied that it would answer in his own district, but it had not been made clear to him how far in the small Unions the Clerk was responsible for keeping up the case-paper when once it was handed in. There ought, he thought, to be some system of duplication.

Mr. H. WELLS-SMITH (Sheffield) observed that thirteen years ago his Board decided to adopt the system of history sheets which it had. Sheffield was one of the up-to-date Unions, and it had a strong desire to administer out-relief to the fullest extent, and to keep its Workhouse as empty as possible. The fuller development of the case-paper system saved them £39,000 in three years. By means of the history sheets they had been able to give full consideration to deserving cases, and to do justice to those cases which they desired to specially benefit. He recommended any Board of Guardians who had not taken the matter in hand to do so.

Mr. A. F. VULLIAMY (Ipswich) thought there was no occasion for saying that he was entirely in favour of the system, for he was of opinion that it commended itself to anybody who knew anything about the Poor Law. He urged that they should not only keep a record of those persons who were legally liable to contribute towards the maintenance of their relations, but also of those who were morally liable. It often happened that a brother or a sister or a step-child was not legally responsible, and often a word from the Chairman of the Board would bring them to recognise their moral duties. With regard to the question of charities, Mr. Aveling had men-

tioned the work of the Charity Organisation Society, and also the poor relief in Paddington. Mr. Vulliamy maintained that it was very important for the Boards of Guardians, and especially the relieving officers, to make themselves acquainted with all the charities in the district, because there were many charities which would prevent a person from becoming a pauper. The system, excellent as it was, was not quite applicable to the country Unions. What use was it to a man who lived miles away? He thought it was a matter which might very well be dealt with by their Central Committee—to consider a plan by which the advantages of the case-paper system might be made applicable to the rural Unions. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. E. E. CRAKE (Eastbourne) drew the attention of the Conference to the statement made with regard to the non-efficiency of the relieving officers of the Eastbourne Union. At the present time, he said, that Board of Guardians was served by three most excellent relieving officers. The reason he mentioned this was because it was frequently the case that some statement made at random would go abroad and injure the reputation of those it had reference to. The Eastbourne Board had absolute confidence in its relieving officers. Miss Brodie-Hall was, however, perfectly justified in saying what she had, because only a few months had elapsed since they had to get rid of an officer. He went on to remark that he had watched the influence of the case-paper system, and could give his personal testimony as to it being most valuable. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. P. GRENVILLE (Richmond, Surrey) thought that the Conference was pretty well satisfied that the system was a most valuable one. His own impression was that there should be duplicate copies of the case-papers in order that the relieving officer might keep one. For instance, when a case came before him he was able to look it out from his own set of papers.

Miss BRODIE-HALL, in reply, said that she had been asked to state that the Bethnal Green Board of Guardians never asked for repayment in cases of consumption. Mr. Shaw, she observed, had brought up no new argument, and had merely offered the same criticisms which he had made at the South-Eastern Poor Law Conference in December last, which were ably answered at that time by Guardians present; as he could find no newer objections than those replied to three months ago, there appeared to be no need to answer any of the statements he had just made. With regard to Mr. Sandford, she could not help saying that he had read into her paper many things which were not in it. Her paper did not say that the case-paper system alone would reduce pauperism. With regard to the £15,000 saved by the Bethnal Green Board of Guardians, which he said he did not believe, she referred the speaker to the Chairman of that Board who had made the statement in public, and whose figures she preferred accepting rather than the statement of disbelief made by Mr. Sandford. Mr. Cowper-Coles had asked the question as to how the system worked in rural districts. At Eastbourne they had not kept the papers in duplicate, but they had insisted upon the relieving officers keeping what was called an officer's diary, in which they noted every particular which they wished to keep for themselves. The duplicate was not necessary if this diary were kept. She did not see any advantage in having duplicates in cases where parishes were scattered. As to the system necessitating more relieving officers and more time, she remarked that at Eastbourne they had had the same number of relieving officers for the last twenty years. As soon as the initial trouble of introducing the system was over, it saved them an enormous amount of time and work. With regard to the Guardians it saved time and trouble. Even if it did give the relieving officers more trouble, that was neither here nor there;

relieving officers were engaged and paid to perform the duties of their office efficiently, and should be properly paid for so doing; if the work was more than they could perform efficiently, further assistance should be given them. (Hear, hear.)

THE CASE-PAPER SYSTEM

By Mr. R. CLIFT HORNER, F.A.I.

THE CASE-PAPER SYSTEM

By Mr. R. CLIFT HORNER, F.A.I.,
Guardian, Ecclesall Bierlow Union.

In June, 1906, Mr. P. H. Bagenal, the experienced and highly respected Local Government Board Inspector for this county, addressing the Ecclesall Guardians on the Administration of Outdoor Relief, said: "It was of course difficult to banish the personal feeling from their minds in dealing with the cases, but at the same time they must see that their pity was not given at the expense of the ratepayers, remembering that they were dealing with large, practically unlimited public funds, which, as such, the outside population realised they could get at by the asking. Their only defence lay in knowing all the facts of the cases brought before them, and they had made a great stride in the direction of this safeguard in the Case-paper System." "He could not help thinking that the Case-paper System had had a very bracing effect in many directions."

In these extracts the object of the Case-paper System is succinctly given: a knowledge of all the facts relating to every application, with a ready reference to those facts over a lengthened period, and a periodical revision of every case whether of in- or out-relief, is what the Case-paper System is designed to give.

What is the Case-paper System?

The Case-paper is a continuous record of the circumstances of each applicant for relief, from the first application to its cessation, and also of the Guardians' decisions thereon from time to time. When the need for relief ceases and is no longer given, the Case-paper is still kept ready for use at any future time, should the same individual apply again.

Foolscap has generally been adopted as a convenient size for the papers, but the number and character of the sheets forming a complete paper varies.

For ready reference a separate sheet or page varying in colour is used for the different items to be recorded; that in use at the Ecclesall Bierlow Union consists of (A) a front or top sheet (yellow wove) on which are recorded the orders of the Relief Committee, with period for which given; each order is dated and initialled by a member of the Com-

mittee ; (E) a white sheet or sheets, one being devoted to *each* relative liable to maintain.

(G) (blue) Settlement Sheet.

(D) (pink) Report of Superintendent of Out-relief and the backing sheet of strong cartridge paper, on the front page of which is tabulated all available information as to applicant and family, employment, clubs, pensions, lodgers, rent, debts, insurance, marriage, heredity, &c., and on the back Report of Relieving Officer.

The backing sheet of cartridge paper is much less bulky than the cardboard backing previously used ; printed on both sides, it becomes a substitute for two sheets, and materially reduces the space required in the Filing Cabinet, an important item when thousands are stored.

On these papers all available knowledge is recorded, and is before the Relief Committee as they consider or reconsider every case ; on it they give or refuse relief, and, as will be seen later, the result is to the great advantage of the deserving poor.

The Case-papers are kept in an index Filing Cabinet, so can be got at immediately whenever required.

The regular revision of *all* cases is very important. For careful and effective administration, constant supervision is absolutely necessary. This is obtained through the Case-

paper System ; every case, whether outdoor, indoor, in lunatic or other institution, comes periodically before the Relief Committee, and the relieving officer has to report any change of circumstance in the case, or of any relative liable to maintain. The longest time between revision should be not more than six months. In the course of only a few years the circumstances of the children of an inmate of the House or asylum may have greatly improved, and so be in a position to contribute, or if already doing so, to increase their payments ; by the Case-paper, such are kept in view.

Promotes Efficiency.—The knowledge that cases are being constantly revised, and that the Guardians see the record of the work of the relieving officer, is a very healthy stimulant to efficiency. Besides the increased efficiency of administration, there are many advantages in the routine work of the Guardians and officers. The *personelle* of Boards change with every election, sometimes very largely, and officers leave and resign, or die ; in all these circumstances the Case-paper supplies those taking up the work with a handy record of the circumstances of a case and the previous orders of the Board, which can be mastered in a comparatively short time. It is also far more satisfactory to the Relief Committee to have the written record to refer

to, rather than be dependent upon the verbal report of the relieving officer, who for his part relies largely upon his memory as to previous history where there is no Case-paper.

In cases before the magistrates it is very advantageous for the clerk or superintendent to have the Case-paper with him to quote the Guardians' orders and the record of the earnings of each member of the family.

In settlements, and in many other ways, the relieving officer finds the papers exceedingly useful, and much time is saved which can be devoted to the important duty of visitation.

A Guardian desiring to know the merits of a case, has not to ask the relieving officer for details, but can obtain the Case-paper, and so be in possession of the salient facts.

The following are a few examples of revelations through the Case-paper :

M. D——, aged forty-six (Dorris D——, aged twelve, at Blackpool, removed ; Phyllis D——, aged nine, here under order in 1904), married, husband deserted her, has not lived with wife for several years, visiting his mother's house for settlement purposes, received information whilst investigating, when the husband was apprehended and committed for one month, and is now paying 3s. 6d. for wife, and maintaining both children at his mother's home.

H. F——, aged fifty-eight, paralysed, lives

in 3 District, said to be very respectable and known to the relieving officer many years. On demanding marriage lines for Case-paper purposes, was told after a deal of hesitation that they were only co-habiting. Out-relief was discontinued.

J. E. R——, aged eighty, found out by Case-papers that he had three sons; eldest, a silver spinner, earning £2; second, a master plumber; and the third a merchant's clerk with a salary of £150 per annum. The sons were ordered to pay all the maintenance, but rather than do that they removed their father.

E. L——, aged sixty-five, married, been in the Workhouse since June 25, 1900; the husband said to be dead, but was found living with another woman; he was committed to prison for neglect, has now removed wife from Workhouse.

Clerical Work and Financial Results.

In Ecclesall Bierlow Union there is an average of 1,050 inmates of House and Cottage Homes, and 635 cases of out-relief. This system was inaugurated by the Board on October 1, 1904. Three temporary clerks were appointed by the Guardians for this and other work, papers for all out-relief cases were completed in six months, the House cases in twelve months, and for our inmates of lunatic

and other institutions in one year and seven months.

The result proved to be a saving for the first year as follows :

On Out-relief less was spent by ...	£255	19	9	
Union Collector received ...	228	7	9	more.
Saved on Settlements, &c. ...	681	12	0	
Total	£1,165	19	6	

Deduct cost of working :

Cabinets	£37	10	0			
Case-papers	25	19	0			
Salaries of Case-paper Clerks (three) ...	184	19	6			
Sundries, Index Cards, Backing Sheets, Forms A and B Sheets, and three Revision Registers	10	2	0			
				258	10	6
Net Saving... ...				£907	9	0

The second year was equally satisfactory, as on the same method it showed a total saving of £1,323 os. 3d. The results for the two years ending September 30, 1906, as far as out-relief cases are concerned, are also very notable. In 1904, before the adoption of Case-papers, the amount of relief was £4 15s. per individual ; in 1905 under the Case-paper system it rose to £5 5s. per individual ; and in 1906 it rose to £5 13s. 6d., or an increase in two years of 18s. 6d. per individual, or

19½ per cent. on the last year without the Case-paper. This proves that the system is advantageous to the really deserving poor, and the total cost was not increased.

Mr. Dearden, the superintendent of outdoor relief, describes the office work as follows: [1]

To fill up a case-paper averages about twenty minutes. On being filled up the relieving officer copies the application into the Application and Report Book, and on the morning previous to the meeting goes over every Case-paper and stamps in the words:

Approved.

.....*Weeks.*

Date.....

At the meeting of the Committee same are taken before them, together with the Application and Report Book, and as the cases are disposed of, one Guardian enters the order on the Case-paper, and one in the Application and Report Book.

The Chairman, after the cases have been

[1] Paper read before the North Midland Conference, October, 1906.

heard, signs the Relief Order Book, which is then countersigned by the Clerk. At the termination of each meeting, each relieving officer hands the Case-papers over to the superintendent, and he, with the assistance of a Case-paper clerk, sorts them into three divisions, namely: (1) old cases taken from the Cabinet; (2) new cases for outdoor relief; and (3) admissions to the Workhouse, Asylums, &c.

He now takes the Revision Register, and enters the name and number of each case forward to the week when same will have to be revised by the Guardians. He then replaces the old cases in the Cabinet which have been extracted during the week, taking the Cabinet Register to see if all have been returned, and, if so, to initial each case on the Register.

He afterwards takes all the Admission and Discharge Registers and enters the index number in a column ruled for that purpose. All new cases are indexed, and the index number is stamped on each Case-paper, and then placed in the Filing Cabinet.

To make the system a success, it should be started *de novo* in every case, for it is surprising the different statements made when the Case-paper is taken to what were given on the first application.

When a person dies who has no children

under sixteen years of age, the Case-paper should be removed from the Filing Cabinet, and placed in a cheap deal box. The index card should also be extracted from the Cabinet and put on the tray in the said box provided for the purpose. These papers may be eventually wanted for tracing hereditary pauperism.

A second box is required for the non-settled cases which have been removed to other Unions, but in this case the index card should be left in the index drawer of the Filing Cabinet and marked T.N.S.P. (Transferred —Non-settled Poor), and a

Third box is also necessary for cases which have had simply one medical order, or a note to work, at a period not later than two years ago. The index card in these cases should also be left in the cabinet, and marked with the letter "R." and the year of the application.

By the addition of extra sheets the usefulness of the Case-paper may be greatly extended, and will doubtless obtain in time. For instance, a hospital paper has been planned by a medical officer containing diagnosis sheet, chart, diet, treatment, &c.; it is proposed to send this sheet to the medical superintendent on admission of a patient, to be returned to the Cabinet on discharge.

Such a paper would be a guide to the Guar-

dians and officers, say in primary, secondary, or congenital syphilis—a second or third birth, consumption, &c.

Further, a paper might be sent to the master for the general conduct classification to be entered on it, which would be useful for reference on a later admission.

The principle of the Case-paper, though necessarily in a different and simpler form, has been adopted by the Local Government Board in the Amended Regulations (Organisation for Unemployed), 1906, under the name of "Record Paper,"[1] which form will be familiar to those Guardians who, with their relieving officers, assist distress relief committees. If similar "Record Papers" were adopted and filed by the public charities within a Union, and available for inspection by the relieving officers, while those of the Union might be referred to by the officers of the charities, it is obvious that great advantages would accrue to the charities and the Guardians; much overlapping and some misplaced charity would be prevented.

In conclusion, I hope that this explanation of the Case-paper system will lead to its general adoption, convinced that if sympathetically worked by Guardians and officers, its benefits will be manifest to Poor Law

[1] Thirty-fifth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, pages 434, 435.

administrators of every class, it will ameliorate the condition of the deserving poor, and deter the unworthy from seeking relief at the public expense.

Discussion.

Mr H. Beaumont (Wakefield) said that the paper was a very admirable one: it had the great virtue of not being too long, and it was one which they had been able to comprehend very clearly. The application of this system had been carefully considered by many who had given a good deal of thought to the administration of the Poor Law, and personally he felt that the suggestions deserved the serious attention of all Boards of Guardians, and especially of the larger ones. In London the system had worked very successfully in many Unions, and Clerks had told him how successful they had been in getting better and fuller particulars, and in saving money too. Although Guardians did not always look on the money side of matters in administering the Poor Law, yet they certainly ought to do so, and the system described by Mr Horner would enable them to give a more equitable distribution of relief in different cases. There could be no better means of keeping a check on the poor than by opening these registers, in which the name of every applicant would be indexed, and the correct record of his past entered. In settlement and removal cases these histories of the applicants would be most useful in every way, and disputes on facts between the several Unions interested would be avoided. The magistrates, too, would find it very useful when applications were made for orders of committal, if the relieving officer could place the case-paper before them and say, "Here is the full record." Of course they all knew that relieving officers were liable to

make mistakes, to forget facts, not intentionally, but under the case-paper system this would be impossible. He was quite convinced that this was the proper system to adopt, and the very fact that the President of the Local Government Board had asked Guardians to keep proper registers only confirmed him in this opinion. Those Unions which kept the register had got the groundwork of the case-paper system—it was only, in fact, a question of amplifying the registers very considerably. The card system was one kind of amplification, but it had reference to the indexing of the names rather than to anything else. The Clerk to the Halifax Union had a very elaborate card record, and he could turn up any card and get complete information at a glance. Of course all these additions, and so forth, meant extra expense and work, but if at Ecclesall they saved over £1,000 the first year, the system was surely worth considering and trying for a short time. It would be rather a difficult matter at first in the larger Unions, but when once the investigations and the records were complete the system would, he was sure, be found to be of great value. (Applause.)

Mr. T. SMITH (late Clerk to the Ecclesall Bierlow Union, and Hon. Secretary to the Conference) said that the reader of the paper was a Guardian of that Union, and the paper itself was naturally of great interest to him. He would like to remind them all that the introduction of the case-paper system to Ecclesall was entirely due to Mr Clift Horner attending a Central Poor Law Conference in London. (Hear, hear.) A great many Guardians were fond of saying, "What is the use of attending Conferences? What good ever comes from them?" Well, they at Ecclesall had now a very splendid reply to croakers of that kind—they were able to quote Mr Clift Horner and the introduction of the case-paper system. (Hear, hear.) He must confess that he was not particularly enthusiastic himself when the question was first mooted; they had

generally over a thousand inmates, and to begin to work out the whole of their histories was a very considerable task, to say nothing of expense. But all the trouble and expense was more than saved when the work was done. They all knew what a cumbersome book the Application and Report Book was, but this book had not been done away with at present at Ecclesall. In certain Unions several columns had been dispensed with, and they were hoping that the time would come when it would not be required at all, and that the Relief Order Book and the case-papers would be all that would be wanted at the audit. The old report books gradually became filled with orders of the Guardians, and were put on one side, and then new books were started, with the result that in a year or two the old books became an absolute dead letter. Relieving officers left or died; new Guardians came and took the work of the old with very little knowledge of what had gone on in the past. The advantage of the case-paper system was that as soon as a case was called before the Committee the Guardians had before them an entire record of that case; all the past relief given was shown, the occasions when relief was refused were shown, and the Guardians were at once able to judge the application on its merits. It often happened that when people first applied they had families incapable of helping them. But as time went on, and the children grew up, they began to earn money, and eventually they were in a position to assist. The case-paper system was valuable here because it gave all this information, and enabled the Guardians to pounce upon relatives when their circumstances were such as they were able to contribute. Of course the cost was a great deterrent to the smaller Unions, but he was sure that where the relief cases were numerous, the system would very soon pay for itself. (Hear, hear.) He would not go so far as to say that it would make them money, or save

them money, though it had done so at Ecclesall, but he was quite sure that in a moderate-sized Union it would pay for the additional cost of the working. He need only add that these Conferences were, to his mind, of very great value, though they all got very weary at times of one Union endeavouring to hold itself up as an example to others. (Hear, hear.) But when a Union had benefited by what it had learnt at a Conference, then the least it could do was to hand down to other Conferences, as Mr Horner had done, a statement of the benefits it had derived. (Hear, hear.) He was sure that Mr Horner would not feel that his time had been wasted if one or two others would, at any rate, give a trial to the case-paper system for a year or two, and personally he felt sure that when once it was properly handled by a Board, it would never be relinquished for any other system. (Applause.)

Mr. FRED. W. MEE (Clerk, Hunslet), as representing a Union which had quite recently adopted the case-paper system, said he had listened with very much pleasure to Mr Horner's paper. The Committee of his Board recommended strongly, after the Central Conference two or three years ago, that the system should be adopted in the Union, but unfortunately, as in some other Unions, the proposal met with some hostility on the part of the relieving officers, who considered that it would greatly increase their duties and their work. In reference to that feeling the Board did not approve the recommendation of the Committee, and the matter therefore remained in abeyance. However, last year one of the officers who had been in charge of a district nineteen years, and knew the cases thoroughly, died somewhat suddenly, and the Board were brought face to face with the fact that information for which they had paid about £3,000 by way of salary was absolutely lost to them. The question was re-opened and reconsidered. An additional officer was appointed—one old officer was made

general relieving officer—and the case-paper system was introduced last March. The result had already been the decrease of £10 a week in the relief given, and this without doing an injustice to any one—in fact, the relief in deserving cases had been increased—whilst undeserving and non-necessitous cases had been weeded out. (Hear, hear.) Apart from that, they were sure to save money by reason of the contribution they would receive from relatives liable to be called upon to assist in the maintenance of inmates—relatives who had hitherto kept in the background. Every applicant had to sign a certificate that the statement he made was a true and correct one. On the first day this came into operation a man who had been on the books for some time signed the paper, but the next morning he went to the relieving officer and said that he had changed his mind and would not apply for relief any longer. The officer went further into the matter and found that he was receiving a pension of 5s. a week from a firm, so that the man's conscience had evidently smitten him. In another instance they found that a man who had been on the books some time was entitled to a life interest in the sum of £850. He declared that he had no source of income, and that was a fact, because he had sold his interest and got rid of the money. But his sons would be entitled to the reversion on his death, and the case was knocked off the list. That man went to a neighbouring Union and obtained out-relief there. When statements were reduced to writing they were generally found to be correct, and this was one of the advantages of the system. Sanction had been obtained to the dispensing with five or six columns from the Application and Report Book, but he doubted the advantage of this, and very probably his Board would go back to the old form in that respect. As to the case-paper system being a great advantage on the old system there could be no donbt whatever. (Hear, hear.)

Mr WELLS-SMITH (Sheffield) said that pretty nearly twenty years ago Sheffield adopted what was now called the case-paper system. He did not like the name but he liked the system—and during the first few years Sheffield saved £23,000 in out-door relief alone. The system was certainly a very valuable one to a large Union. He had been wondering why their friends at Ecclesall did not find this system out until two or three years ago, in such close proximity as they were to Sheffield. (Laughter.) As to the colour of the papers used he was not quite so sure about them, and with the advent of the Socialists it might be necessary to add still another colour to those in use at Ecclesall. (Laughter.) He did hope that the good old feudal institution called settlements would one day or other be knocked on the head. In Sheffield a number of people, because they had swopped houses and gone to the other side of the street, had broken their continuous connection and were not entitled to the very good things that the Guardians were able to offer them in their grand hotel. (Laughter.) He trusted that Mr Burns would find a way of getting rid of feudalism in one of its most acute forms. (Hear, hear.) As to the record sheet system he was reminded of a line he saw on a Welshman's sheet, "Have you ever died before? if so, state the reason why." (Laughter.)

Mr. WILSON (Dewsbury) said that his Board had not adopted a slavish imitation of the system put before them by Ecclesall; they had tried to study expense. The request of the Local Government Board that they should prepare registers foreshadowed, no doubt, what would ultimately become an Order. Of course there were objections from the relieving officers on the ground of the extra work, but at Rotherham they found that a yellow wove foolscap which was blue—(laughter)—quite suited their purposes. If people objected to the blue they were told that it was yellow wove, and so things

were satisfactory all round. (Laughter.) There was no doubt that all self-respecting Unions would adopt some such system. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. BUCKTON (Leeds) said that Mr. Horner showed the expense of working in his paper, but said nothing about the cost of offices. In Leeds they had not started the system yet, but the matter was receiving favourable consideration, and when the Guardians saw the copy of Mr. Horner's paper he believed they would be entirely converted. (Hear, hear.)

Canon GREENWOOD (Tadcaster) mentioned that reference had been made to the objection of relieving officers to the system on the score of additional trouble. To his mind this objection was a very valuable argument in its favour. Without wishing to say a single word against their very efficient relieving officers, he did feel that it would be an advantage to the ratepayers and to the Guardians and to the poor if the work was done in a less perfunctory and more methodical manner, and the introduction of the system would help to make the officers more diligent in their search after cases. (Hear, hear.) In a large percentage of the cases of wife desertion the Guardians were paying money away because the officers did not take sufficient care in searching after the husbands. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. EDWIN A. RIGBY (Clerk, Huddersfield) said that they had met two or three times to try to establish a system at Huddersfield, but hitherto—owing partly to the demands of the Local Government Board with reference to the registers of pauperism, and partly owing to the question of expense—they had not brought any scheme into operation. He would like to emphasise this point, that if they did adopt a system it did not necessarily mean the elaborate one that had been shadowed forth that morning. (Hear, hear.) He entirely agreed with the main arguments that had been advanced, and that a permanent record of each case would be invaluable to the committees. At Hudders-

field they used simple little index cards, on the back of which were the leading particulars connected with the case, an epitomised history of each applicant, and this he had found to be very useful in the matter of the ins-and-outs. The outdoor cases were treated in this way as well. (Hear, hear.) The necessity for thorough exhaustive inquiries and information could not be over-stated; such inquiries were really at the basis of a proper and true administration of poor relief. (Hear, hear.) Apart from the case-paper system, it seemed to him that some of the Unions had been doing their duty very badly in the past if they had found it possible to save £23,000 in the course of a few years. (Laughter.) How much relief were they paying before they adopted the case-papers, and what sort of investigations were they making? (Hear, hear.)

Mr. H. Botterill (Clerk, Driffield) said he was Clerk to a Union where the Guardians had declined to keep a register as ordered by the Local Government Board; but he and his fellow-officers were doing so, and had no doubt whatever as to the great value it really was. (Hear, hear.) The relief register suggested by the President of the Local Government Board did not, however, give sufficient information, there being no column for the amount of the relief given for one thing, neither was there a column for information as to relatives and anything of that kind, The case-paper system, he believed, would be of great service to officers and Guardians all over the country. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. J. W. Tillotson (Halifax) said he was sure the Clerk to the Halifax Board would be very glad to explain the system they had adopted there. What each Board should do was to adopt to the size of its business the business methods of to-day. (Hear, hear.) A big firm naturally required a rather more elaborate system than a small one, and that was the case with the Unions. At Halifax they gained all the information which was gained by the

case-paper system, and, he thought, rather more economically. All systems were useful—they must adopt that one which suited them best. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. CLIFT HORNER then briefly replied on the discussion, pointing out that the principle of the case-paper system seemed to have met with general acceptance. The difficulties usually met with had been the opposition of officers, and they experienced something of that at Ecclesall. He made friends with the officers, however, and bespoke their sympathy and help, and though one of them, the eldest, was opposed to the scheme at first, he had now become a most enthusiastic supporter of it. (Hear, hear.) There was no doubt it did take a little more time and trouble at first, but as soon as the papers were made out it saved the relieving officer's time considerably.

PAUPER STATISTICS AND THE CASE-PAPER SYSTEM

By Dr. JOHN MILSON RHODES

PAUPER STATISTICS AND THE CASE-PAPER SYSTEM

By Dr. JOHN MILSON RHODES

Alderman of the County Palatine of Lancaster, and Chairman of the Central Committee of Poor Law Conferences, &c., &c.

We are all more or less acquainted with the official survey of England and Wales. We can inform ourselves by consulting it as to the physical configuration of the country, and also to a great extent the geological formations which cause the variations we find as we travel over the country. In the figures published by the Local Government Board in their Annual Report, we are furnished with a most useful collection of statistics. They give a vast amount of information as to the heights and depths of the economic conditions of the people, but unfortunately we have no fundamental figures, we have no economic maps demonstrating the causes, the effects of which we see in the 822,786 paupers on the rates to-day in England and Wales—an army of paupers that proves that the distribution of the pauper bacillus is as widespread

as that of the tubercle bacillus ; and probably the distribution of both to a great extent depends upon one common cause, viz., environment and not heredity.

The improvement in the hygienic conditions under which the people live has resulted in a large diminution in the death-rate of the country, and the same causes, or those causes in combination with others, play an important part in improving the economic condition of the people. That the malign causes are less powerful than they were half a century ago is, I think, proved by the following statistics, taken from the Reports of the Local Government Board :

	Indoor Paupers.		Outdoor Paupers.		Total.	
Year.	Mean Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Mean Number.	Ratio per 1,000.	Mean Number.	Ratio per 1,000.
1853	110,148	6·0	776,214	42·7	886,362	48·7
1903	233,397	7·0	589,548	17·9	822,786	24·9

A glance at the figures shows that the ratio of pauperism to-day is little more than 50 per cent. of what it was half a century ago.

The causes that have been at work in England have also had their effect in North Wales, as the following figures prove :

Indoor.		Outdoor.		
1884	1903	1884	1903	Year.
1,903	1,964	19,063	16,349	Paupers.

As the population has increased during the

same period by 28,000, it is evident that "the good old days" as regards pauperism are matters of fiction and not of fact, and it may interest the suffering ratepayers of to-day to know that their burdens are not so heavy as those of their forefathers. The following are the official figures for Wales:

1832	... ...	7·7 per head of population.
1904	... ...	4·0¾ " "

The figures for the counties in North Wales were as follows:

Anglesey	7·6
Carnarvonshire	6·4
Denbighshire	8·11
Flintshire	7·4
Merionethshire	8·4
Montgomeryshire	11·3

The last county on the list in 1832 spent £37,000 on poor relief; in 1904 it spent £13,000, and that with an increase in population from 37,000 to 63,000.

If you turn to Mr. Bircham's return you find that there are causes at work to-day causing very considerable variations in the ratio of pauperism. One cause is, I am sorry to see, a decrease in the population of twenty of the Welsh Unions. That I hope and believe is only a temporary state of affairs, and I trust that before long Wales will not only resound with loyal tunes, but also with

the thousands of sounds associated with the full employment of the people.

In drawing attention to the variations in the statistics of the various Unions, do not for one moment think I am attacking the Guardians of certain Unions. I am not—even if I wished, I am not sufficiently acquainted with the conditions existing in those Unions to express an opinion, and I also know that it would be absurd to attempt to carry on a large Union like Manchester or Liverpool, with hundreds of common lodging-houses with thousands of occupants, many of them little better than tramps, exactly as you can a rural Union where the vast majority of the people have lived all their lives in the same village, and everybody knows everybody else.

What I do say is that we want a better idea as to the causes that result in these variations being so great; *e.g.*, in one Union you will find 24 paupers per 1,000 of population, in another 38.

In South Wales there are 8 Unions below this figure, and the variations in outdoor paupers are as great, the figures rising from 23 to 41 per 1,000.

There is one thing that Mr. Bircham's instructive return shows, viz., that crime and sexual immorality cause an increase of outdoor pauperism in Wales of over 6 per cent. The figures are made up as follows:

Unmarried mothers	108
Children dependent on them	155
Wives of prisoners	234
Children dependent on them	767
Wives deserted	651
Children dependent on them	1,746
	3,661

Remember that these figures do not include indoor cases, and that the ratio of illegitimate births in North Wales is 59 per 1,000 compared with 39 for all England and Wales. Considering those things, I think you will agree with me that sexual immorality is a powerful cause of a high rate of pauperism. I do not know if all the members of the Conference are acquainted with the family trees of two well-known American county families. One is the Jukes, and when I say that their historian, Dr. Drysdale, has shown that from a man and woman who, I was told in the States, were a couple of tramps, have sprung in seven generations 709 individuals, every one of whom was either idiot, murderer, prostitute, thief, or robber, you see what a potent factor this cause may be. There is another well-known family, the tribe of Ishmael; they have produced in six generations 1,785 criminals, prostitutes, and paupers, and their history covers several thousands of pages in the State records.

Like causes produce like effects, and from the inquiries I made when in the States, I

have no doubt that the same economic causes are at work there as here. If we are to become acquainted with these causes we must know the life history of the pauper, and that is just what we do not know at present, and yet there is only too much material to study.

Poor laws should be studied as a science and an art, and if we are to do that, we must alter our system. As every Guardian knows, the orders of the Local Government Board direct the relieving officer to enter in his application book the names, &c., of those making application. The consequence is, that if you want the history of Hugh Owen or Evan Thomas, you may have to search through many pages, and any one who has tried it knows what that means. Some people say, "Oh! but the relieving officer knows all about his cases." No one appreciates more than I do the excellent work relieving officers do; but relieving officers, like Guardians, come and go, and you must have, if you are to do your duty by the poor and the rate-payers, a thorough knowledge of the cases brought before you.

At the time of the cotton famine, over forty years ago, in the Chorlton Union the distress became appalling. Thousands of new cases came on the lists in a few months, and it was evident that the old system was incompetent to meet the pressure of the time. As a

temporary expedient the Chorlton Guardians adopted instead of the application book the application sheet, upon which all the other particulars are entered. When one was filled, another sheet was attached. These sheets were kept in pigeon-holes, so that if the particulars of a case are required, you can get the whole history in less than a minute, instead of hunting through many pages. We have never gone back to the old system, and don't intend to. New wine requires new bottles, and we must adapt ourselves and our system of administration to the times in which we live. And our old application sheet improved is the case-paper of to-day.

The fault of the case-papers in use in England is that many of them are not well adapted for filing; *e.g.*, some of them consist of a couple of sheets of flimsy fools-cap, about the worst possible form you can have. The best case-paper that I am acquainted with I found in America. The case-paper shows the estimated income per week, number of rooms, rent, the time the pauper has lived in the place, age, occupation, physical defects, children and their earnings, and whether the pauper is insured or not. These, with any other papers, go into an envelope, and are placed in filing cabinets with a card index. Just to see how it worked, I asked for the particulars of a pauper whose

name and address I had got hold of. In less than a minute I had the seven years' history of that pauper's life and the report of the *post-mortem* on him at his death.

I do not for one moment say that the record paper cannot be improved—in my opinion it can be; but I feel confident that it is an enormous improvement upon the English forms in use. One of the improvements I should like to see carried out would be an adequate classification of the causes of poverty. I am well aware that the difficulties in the way of deciding what the real cause is in certain cases are enormous, because in many cases the cause is a complex one. Any expert on this subject knows that drink, immorality, and laziness are very often found as a trinity in unity, and intemperance and lack of employment often indissolubly united; but still with over 900,000 paupers I think we may say with certainty that had there been a uniform system of classification, we should have had a large amount of useful information that would have been most valuable to us. May I digress here to point out a cause of pauperism that I believe is a powerful one, viz., the slum dwelling. No doubt there is something in the saying that it is the people who dwell in them who make the slums, but there is more truth in the saying that the slums make the pauper. You

fine and rightly punish the grocer and butcher who make a profit by the selling of that which is injurious to health, and I see no reason why the property jobber and the house sweater should be allowed to. I know the slums well. I have been in them on a hot summer day, and I say, without hesitation, that if I lived there, the wretched surrounding, the vitiated atmosphere, "the beastly degradation of stink," as Kingsley called it, and all the mental, moral, and physical evils associated with such places, would very soon drive me to try to find comfort in the public-house. It is not only the poor who live in the slum dwellings who have to pay dearly for them, not only in rent, but in the loss of wages caused by the sickness resulting from the unhealthy dwelling, but also the ratepayers at large, who have to provide for a large number of the cases in the sick wards of the Workhouse. This is not mere theory. Recently I came across, in Manchester, two cases that prove it. Two slum areas (two of many I am sorry to say) were cleared, and working men's dwellings erected on the site, with the result that the rate of mortality has fallen from 57 to 28 per 1,000.

"To cure is the voice of the past, to prevent the Divine whisper of to-day," and if we are to reduce our pauperism, it can only

be done by removing the causes that produce such disastrous effects. There is no Aladdin's lamp that will do it. Patient perseverance in well-doing is what is required, and the first thing is to know the causes, and I think the case-paper will help us there. It was well said that the political economist pilots the ship of State, the statistician holds the lead line. With the mass of pauperism our forefathers had to contend with, it took them all their time to cut down the weeds as they grew. It is for us to eradicate the roots from which they spring, and in their place to plant the seed which shall furnish in the days to come a race well fitted to fight and conquer in the battle of life.

The following table shows the necessity of a uniform system of classification.

The Right Hon. C. Booth's classification of the causes of poverty :

Cause.	Percentage at Stepney.	Percentage at St. Pancras.
Drink	12·6	21·9
Immorality	2·5	6·9
Laziness	1·9	10·6
Pauper association, heredity ...	1·1	1·8
Incapacity, temper, &c.... ...	3·8	2·4
Extravagance	1·3	0·4
Lack of work or trade misfortune	4·4	2·2
Accident	4·7	2·6
Death of husband	4·1	0·4
Desertion	0·5	2·4
Mental derangement	1·7	4·3
Sickness	26·7	20·7
Old age	32·8	23·4
Other causes	1·9	

The next table is taken from my friend Mr. Alderman M'Dougall's careful inquiry into the causes of pauperism in Manchester :

Cause.	Percentage.
Old age or infirmity	14·86
By disease or accidental injuries (not misconduct)	15·62
Head of family unable to find employment, though willing to work...	2·78
Idleness and thriftlessness, apart from drink or immoral habits	0·0
Drunkenness in men...	24·32
„ „ women	4·40
Widows and children of drunkards ...	21·84
„ „ husbands being well conducted	15·30
Widows who have drunken sons who could support them if steady	·68
Women reduced to pauperism by immoral conduct (not drunkards)	·20

The following table of causes is one condensed by Dr. Warner from the "Statistisches Handbuch für den Preussischen Staat":

Cause.	Percentage.
Accidental—	
Fault of dependant	2·2
„ breadwinner	·90
Death „	·5
Non-accidental—	
Death of breadwinner	16·3
Sickness	28·5
Infirmity or physical defects	16
„ of age	24
Large number of children	2·1
Lack of employment	2·8
Intemperance	1·3
Indolence...	·6
Other causes	5·6
Undetermined causes	·10

The last is the percentages of the causes of poverty, as given in the Report of the Buffalo C.O.S., U.S.:

Cause.	Percentage.
Lack of employment	30·2
Sickness	20·5
Accident...	3·4
Insanity of breadwinner	·8
Insufficient earnings	7·3
No male support	6·4
Imprisonment of breadwinner	1·7
Intemperance	11·3
Thriftlessness	7·1
Physical defects	8·4
No cause...	2·9

The case-papers in use in H.M. prisons are of a very convenient size, and with certain alterations to adopt them for Poor Law cases would answer our purpose very well.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX I

HOW THE CASE-PAPER SYSTEM IS WORKED IN THE PARISH OF ST. MARY ABBOTS, KENSINGTON

There are two Relief Offices, one at the Guardians' Offices, Marloes Road, Kensington, and the other at Mary Place, Notting Hill, about two miles distant. The Relief Committees meet at both offices weekly, and the following system is adopted :

Every morning a messenger leaves the Relief Offices at Mary Place about 11 a.m. furnished by the Relieving Officers with a list of all new cases. He at once brings it to the Case-paper Department at Marloes Road to find out from the Index if Case-papers are already in existence ; if there are, the messenger then takes them back to the Relief Offices at Mary Place for them to be filled up and submit at the next meeting of the Relief Committees.

After each meeting of the Relief Committees the Case-papers are sent to the Case-paper Department for safe custody, such department being under the supervision of the Superintendent Relieving Officer.

All Case-papers are kept in the Case-paper Department, except the permanent Out-Relief Cases, and these are in the custody of their respective Relieving Officers.

The Relief Offices at Mary Place and the Case-Paper Department at Marloes Road are connected by telephone, so that in any case of emergency an inquiry can easily be made.

In the Case-paper Department a record is always kept in a book of any Case-papers that are taken or sent away from the Department.[1]

[1] From information kindly supplied by Mr. W. R. Stephens, the Clerk to the Board of Guardians, who declares the system to be a very valuable one and to work admirably in the parish.

APPENDIX II

WOODBRIDGE UNION

In this Union the Relieving Officers, on receiving an application for relief, take the forms to the applicant and fill in all particulars relative to the cases. The information so obtained is checked, tested, and added to as far as possible. The paper so filled up is produced to the Board when the application is brought up for consideration, and is then numbered, indexed, and filed. The files are kept at the Union Office, in the custody of the Clerk, but accessible to the Relieving Officers, so as to enable them to add fresh information when required, or to refer to them for the past history of any applicant.[1]

Two forms are in use, one (Form A) for the particulars of the applicant and his or her family, and the other (Form B) for the particulars of relatives liable to maintain. Form A fills three separate sheets.

[1] From information kindly supplied by Mr. Horace E. Kell, the Clerk to the Guardians.

FORM A—SHEET I.

WOODBRIDGE UNION.

No.

Name of Applicant..... *Creed*.....

Name of Husband or Wife..... *Creed*.....

Residences.....*How long there*.....

" ..... " .....

" ..... " .....

Date of Application.	Nature and Cause of Application, and how dealt with by the Officers concerned.	Order of Guardians.

FORM A—SHEET 2.

1. (*a*) Names of Applicant and Wife (Husband).	Age.	M. S. W.	Date of Birth.	Where Born. (Address.)	Occupation and Earnings of each Person on 1st Application. For subsequent Application see Sheet C.
(*b*) Names of Children under 16 ...					
(*c*) Names of Children over 16... ...					See Form B.
2. (*a*) Weekly Rent and Arrears					
(*b*) Other Debts					
(*c*) Club or Benefit Society					
(*d*) Trade Society ...					
(*e*) Nature and Source of other Assistance (if any)					
3. INSURANCE.					
(*a*) Amount due at Death					
(*b*) Amount of Premium...					
(*c*) Name of Society ...					
(*d*) Person to whom nominated					
(*e*) Person holding the Policy					

FORM A—SHEET 3.

4. (*a*) Name of nearest Relative or Friend ... (*b*) Relationship ... ... (*c*) Address	
5. (*a*) Name of late Husband (*b*) Date of late Husband or Wife's Death ... (*c*) Place of his or her Death	
6. (*a*) When and where Applicant last chargeable ... (*b*) Period of Residence in the Parish without Relief or Interruption ... ... (*c*) Rent and amount due	

7. Where Married.	Date of Marriage.	Maiden Name of Wife.	If Certificate inspected by Relieving Officer.

RELIEVING OFFICER'S OBSERVATIONS.

DATE.	

FORM B—SHEET 4.

A REPORT on the circumstances of.....
liable to maintain.....his.....
who is at present in.....chargeable to the
WOODBRIDGE UNION.

Name and Age of the Relative liable	
His Place of Residence ...	
What is his Occupation, and where employed? ...	
What are his Earnings? ...	
What other Sources of Income?	
Has he a Wife? If so, has she Employment, and what does she earn?	
Names, Ages, Occupations, and Earnings of Children	
What Rent does he pay? ...	
What Arrears does he owe?	
Is he in Debt?	
Is he a Member of a Club or Friendly Society? ...	
Does he maintain, or contribute to the Maintenance of, any other Person ...	
Other Particulars (if any) ...	
Source of Information ...	

Dated.....

.....

Relieving Officer.

APPENDIX III

ECCLESALL BIERLOW UNION

THE EDGE, SHEFFIELD,

September 13, 1909.

DEAR SIR,—I very much regret that I have not answered your letter of August 19th before this.

If the information is not too late, I hope that the enclosed Report from the Superintendent of Out-Relief relating to the working of the Case-paper System here will be of some use to you. We have had no difficulty with the working of the system and, personally, I find it of the greatest use. The history of any particular case is before you, entailing a search of only a few minutes. There can be no doubt that, to the Guardians in carrying out their Out-Relief duties, it is of the greatest assistance.

Personally, I am of opinion that, to amplify in small particulars the present system of Case Paper and to abolish the Application and Report Book altogether, would save an immense amount of the Relieving Officers' time.

Believe me,
Yours faithfully,
J. E. MOULDING,
Clerk to the Guardians.

Sir William Chance, Bart.,
Orchards, near Godalming, Surrey.

ECCLESALL BIERLOW UNION RELIEF DEPARTMENT

THE EDGE, SHEFFIELD, *August* 24, 1909.

DEAR MR. MOULDING,—Referring to Sir William Chance's letter of the 19th inst., I can confidently say that the Case-paper System in this Union has answered all expectations, and considerable difficulty would be experienced by the Relieving Officers in the event of it being discontinued.

The Application and Report Book only contains very meagre information and, when it has been stored away for a long period, the desired particulars of any individual case necessitate a very long and tedious search. On the other hand, the Case Paper furnishes a complete history of every case, with the numerous and varied orders of the Guardians marked thereon. It is of much assistance when proceedings are taken in the Police Court for Orders of Maintenance on relatives. Information in respect of dates and places of birth, and particulars as to residence, is also available for the Settlement Officer. Should an Officer be away ill or on holiday, the acting Officer can continue the work without writing to, or consulting, his absent colleague.

There are now 6,810 Case Papers in the Filing Cabinet, occupying twenty-five drawers and, in addition, there are a few hundreds filed away in reserve boxes. A Register of Case Papers taken out of the Cabinet is kept and, by this means, all the Papers can be traced without trouble.

The system is now working at West Ham and also, I believe, at West Derby.

I am, dear Mr. Moulding, yours faithfully,

ALLAN DEARDEN,
Superintendent and Collector.

J. E. Moulding, Esq.
Clerk to the Guardians, Ecclesall Bierlow Union.

APPENDIX IV

EXTRACT FROM "POOR LAW OFFICERS' JOURNAL," MARCH 11, 1904

THE HISTORY SHEETS SYSTEM

To the Editor of the Journal

SIR,—I can hardly flatter myself that all the members of the Central Poor Law Conference who heard the allusions on Wednesday, last week, to the paper on "History Sheets," which I contributed to South Eastern Poor Law Conference in December, will ever read it. I should, therefore, esteem it a great favour if you would insert this letter in your widely read paper. Metaphor is notoriously a trap for the unwary, and an axiom both of composition and debate is, "Don't ride a Metaphor to death," and it was as part of a metaphor I first used the expression "choking off." After giving a list of most unsuitable applications, such as (1) Russian Pole, cabinet maker, in regular work, wanted medical attendance for wife; (2) wife of licensed vitualler for admission through drink; (3) labourer in regular work, 30s. a week, for medical order for wife, said he could afford to pay, but thought it would be less trouble to apply to the Relieving Officer; (4) warehouseman refused medical order, and employed his own doctor because he could not

afford time to attend Board; (5) man, 38, withdrew application on reading notice in Hall *re* delirium tremens cases—he was then drunk; (6) single man, 38, would not wait to see the doctor, said he was going home to have a drink; (7) builder's labourer, for admission, withdrew unless exempted from the bath; (8) carman, withdrawn because he objected to Relieving Officer's visiting; (9) cigar maker, returned milk ticket because he objected to cow's milk, and, subsequently, returned all the tickets because he objected to tickets of any kind; (10) man, in comfortable circumstances, willing to pay for Infirmary treatment, but did not want to be pauperised; (11) woman, aged, for admission to Infirmary, £200 in her possession; I went on to say: "Now, the probability is that the greater part of these eighty-one cases are permanently choked off their craving to drink at the inexhaustible fount of the luckless ratepayer's much begrudged and often hard-earned cash, a draught that, in this case, would bless neither him who gives nor him who takes, &c." That such persons are wholly unsuited for Poor Law relief has nothing whatever to do with the History Sheet System, *per se*, but with the very A B C of Poor Law administration. The only alternative would be simply to instruct Relieving Officers to give all applicants anything they asked for, asking no questions. The point of the paragraph is that, should any of these persons make a second application, their History Sheet would appear too.

The second time I spoke of "choking off" was as follows: "To sum up, you must not expect the History Sheet to work miracles. It will not abolish pauperism, but it will decrease it by choking off the loafer, the cadger, and all those who, while very far from the destitution that is thankful to creep for food, and warmth, and shelter into the Workhouse, are by no means averse to having a try to get anything that can be had for nothing, above all, without working for it." Now, loafers, cadgers, and persons

who live on others, are NOT paupers until Guardians choose to make them so by granting them Poor Law relief. It is quite allowable to suggest that their upkeep should fall on Imperial Taxation, *viâ* the Magistrate, rather than on the rates. The alarming rise in Pauperism can only be checked by preventing persons who are not destitute becoming paupers, it would puzzle the wit of man to devise any other way. Under our present social system it is impossible to avoid destitute persons becoming paupers, and I defy anybody to find one harsh or even severe word in my whole paper pronounced on persons in receipt of relief.

History Sheets are intended for those Boards who wish to have full details as to whom they are giving relief and why, in order that they may give it in the most efficacious manner. That it should be taken for granted that the Board refusing relief is, *prima facie*, in the wrong is a most dangerous fallacy. The Guardian who turns a citizen into a pauper, when there is no destitution, is doing his brother man and his country a deadly wrong.

I am, Sir,
Yours &c.,
"MARY E. E. JAMES."

5, Paradise Row, Bethnal Green, N.E.
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